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ABSTRACT

This guide is intended for Job Training Partnership Act (JTPA) program service delivery areas (SDAs) and educators involved in providing educational services in the Summer Youth Employment and Training Program (SYETP). It presents strategies for delivering high-quality instruction that promotes active learning, skill transfer, and skill durability and gives participants sufficient opportunities to learn and practice new skills. The following are among the topics discussed: rationale for the guide and characteristics of high-quality educational services; role of SDA leadership in improving the quality of educational services (importance of SDA leadership, challenges of providing effective leadership, effective transitions from SYETP to JTPA programs); activities in support of training (targeting and recruiting youth for SYETP services, assessment and service planning in a limited time frame, challenges and principles of the case management approach to instruction); project-based learning (choosing appropriate projects, identifying project learning goals and objectives, preplanning projects, orienting youth to project-based learning, guiding youth in conducting projects, implementing appropriate assessment procedures); and classroom training (challenges to providing high-quality classroom training, providing high-quality instructional content, promoting high-quality instructional materials). Concluding the guide are thumbnail sketches of high-quality traditional classroom programs and classroom programs using real-world context. (MN)

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SPR

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Technical Assistance Guide: Providing Educational Services in the Summer Youth Employment and Training Program

Technical Assistance Guide

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I. INTRODUCTION AND OVERVIEW

WHY A GUIDE TO PROVIDING EDUCATIONAL INSTRUCTION TO SUMMER YOUTH PARTICIPANTS?

In the past decade, the tenor and impetus of the Summer Youth program has shifted markedly to become a vehicle for redressing the educational needs of participants.

The Summer Youth Employment and Training Program (SYETP), funded under Title II-B of the Job Training Partnership Act (JTPA), has its origins in a long-standing federal commitment to providing summer job and training opportunities for disadvantaged youth. However, in the last decade the tenor and impetus of the Summer Youth program has shifted markedly. From an original focus on giving young people an introduction to the working world, SYETP has now become a vehicle for redressing the basic skills and other educational needs of participants.

This new thrust was introduced with the 1986 Amendments to JTPA, which made clear that the purpose of JTPA was to "enhance the basic educational skills of youth (and) encourage school completion," as well as to provide an "exposure to the world of work." Building on this foundation, the 1992 Amendments require an "objective assessment of the basic skills and supportive services needs of each participant," followed by a service strategy that identifies "appropriate services taking into account" the assessment results.

A new strategy for providing Summer Youth instruction encourages programs to link education and work through functional, context-based instruction.

Similarly, Training and Employment Guidance Letters (TEGLs) for SYETP issued by the U.S. Department of Labor (DOL) earlier this decade and meant to provide direction to the field emphasized the importance of "academic enrichment" and that "at least 50 percent of participants" in SYETP nationally should receive educational services. More importantly, a new strategy for providing Summer Youth instruction was promulgated, encouraging programs to link education and work to the fullest extent possible, through functional, context-based instruction.

TEGLs issued by DOL more recently have backed off from promoting specific targets for educational services, but the emphasis on linking work and learning has remained. As articulated by President Clinton, along with then-Secretary of Labor Robert Reich and Secretary of Education Richard Riley, in their bold "Summer

Challenge," the aim is to "remove the artificial line between work and learning."

Specifically, the 1996 Summer Youth TEGL states the following:

> What ETA is promoting is an approach to the summer program, which goes beyond static and self-contained work experience and education components; what we are seeking is a concept of the summer program as a 'total learning experience'... Thus, classrooms should be transformed into interactive, work-related environments and worksites should be re-oriented to include rich learning experiences related to the SCANS Foundation Skills and Competencies."

Transforming educational instruction in the Summer Youth program in the ways called for will prove to be a daunting challenge. Few service delivery areas (SDAs) or their service providers have direct experience designing and delivering enriched, contextual learning. And the short-time frame for SYETP and the difficulty in maintaining continuity from one summer to the next will make transformations on the scale envisioned difficult at best. This Guide is intended to assist in this process.

This Guide is intended to assist SDAs and providers to design and deliver enriched, contextual learning.

STUDY METHODS AND DESIGN

This Guide is one product of an evaluation of the educational component of the Summer Youth Employment and Training Program which is funded by DOL and being conducted jointly by Social Policy Research Associates (SPR) and Brandeis University's Center for Human Resources. In keeping with DOL's guidelines, we define educational services—and therefore the focus of the evaluation—as consisting of efforts by programs to teach "academic subjects and/or ... SCANS foundation skills and competencies" (this definition is taken from the reporting instructions for the Summer Youth program).

The study began during the summer of 1994, when our research staff fanned out to 30 randomly-chosen SDAs across the country. During visits to these sites, staff talked with SDA Summer Youth Coordinators and other administrators and staff to learn about the SDAs' objectives for their Summer Youth program and how they were responding to DOL's guidance. Within each SDA, up to 3 instances of educational instruction (83 in total) were also chosen for in-depth scrutiny; these ranged from traditional classroom instruction using

This Guide is one product on an evaluation of the educational component of the SYETP, which is based on in-depth case studies of 83 educational programs in 30 SDAs across the country.

drill-and-practice methods to innovative examples of project-based learning. For each of these 83 programs, site visitors observed instruction being provided, talked with instructors and mentors (be they classroom teachers or worksite supervisors), reviewed case files, and conducted focus groups with participants.

Meanwhile, the study also entails a quantitative analysis of the relationship between alternative modes of providing educational instruction and outcomes for participants, including gains in reading and math skills, participants' satisfaction with the services they received, and their attendance and grades during their subsequent return to high school once their stint in the Summer Program had ended.

This Guide represents our effort to disseminate information about effective strategies for delivering educational instruction in the context of SYETP. It is based primarily on the quantitative analyses and qualitative data we collected as part of the site visits associated with this project, but also draws on observations the research staff have accumulated as part of their long experience studying related employment and training programs and in delivering technical assistance to programs endeavoring to develop context-rich instructional strategies.

This Guide presents effective strategies for delivering educational instruction in the context of SYETP. It includes examples.

WHAT ARE HIGH-QUALITY EDUCATIONAL SERVICES?

The evaluation and this Guide are based upon a model of high-quality programs, which was adapted for the Summer Youth program from one originally developed by research team members and widely disseminated throughout the JTPA community.[1] The model identifies high-quality practices in support of training as well as indicators of high-quality training content and instructional methods. These elements are briefly described below.

High-Quality Practices in Support of Training

Targeting and Recruitment

The first step is effectively recruiting youth who are targeted for educational services.

The first step is achieving a high-quality educational program is the effective recruitment of youth who are targeted for educational

[1] U.S. Department of Labor. *Improving the Quality of Training Under JTPA.* Research and Evaluation Report Series 91-A, 1991.

services. A quality indicator for this step is whether the SDA has a clear strategy for identifying which youth should be targeted and has developed procedures to effectively recruit them. Frequently, this involves working closely with schools to identify youth who are in need of educational services and developing effective outreach and recruitment procedures.

Initial Assessment

Conducting valid and reliable assessments of youths' skills and interests is the next critical task.

Conducting valid and reliable assessments of youths' skills and interests is the next critical task. The SYETP legislation stipulates that assessment should include the evaluation of youths' basic skills, but the process should go beyond this simple step in several ways. First, assessment should determine whether a youth possesses a broader set of skills required in the labor market, such as the foundation skills and competencies identified by the Secretary's Commission on Necessary Skills (SCANS). Second, it should identify barriers that might impair a youth's ability to be successful in the program. Based on this comprehensive assessment, an individualized training plan can be developed.

Individualized Service Strategies

The assessment results should be used to develop an individualized service strategy tailored to the skills and needs of each participant.

The assessment results should be used to develop an individualized service strategy (ISS) tailored to the skills and interests of each participant. Importantly, this process of service planning should not be viewed as something that is "done for" the participant. Instead, the young person should be integrally involved in setting the goals and planning the services. The service strategy should also set high expectations for what the youth can achieve in the program. The results of the process should be clear, yielding appropriate goals that the participant is committed to achieving.

Case Management

Ongoing case management to shepherd youth through planned services is also critical.

Ongoing case management to identify when the youth's ability to meet the learning objectives is in jeopardy is also critical. Beginning with the process of developing the ISS and assigning youth to services, case management is of value in shepherding the youth through the process of service delivery and monitoring the implementation of the service plan to ensure that it continues to be responsive to the youth's needs. Effective case managers will be able to quickly identify factors that are impeding the youth's ability to meet his or her learning objectives, be they deficiencies with the instruction itself or threats

posed by external circumstances (e.g., personal difficulties, child care needs, and so on).

Linkages with Continuing Educational Activities

Participants can continue to build on their SYETP experiences after the summer when they are linked to continuing educational activities.

After participants complete their SYETP activities, they can continue to build on those experiences by linking to continuing educational activities, including those connected with schools, Title II-C, and other programs.

An important indicator of effective linkages is the extent to which participants' experiences and outcomes in the SYETP program are communicated to their schools. If the summer programs are to be an extension of school-year learning, progress during the summer needs to be recognized, and young people should be acknowledged and rewarded for their gains. Also, youths' experiences with active learning in a functional context will ideally be continued during the school year as part of school-to-work programs, and for out-of-school youth, through continued participation in Title II-C.

High-Quality Educational Services

High-quality instruction and content of educational services can be provided in two modes: through classroom instruction and through work-based instruction. Regardless of which approach is used, however, two dimensions of the quality of training services can be identified: the quality of training content and the quality of instruction.

Quality of Training Content

Well-specified objectives send a message to participants about what is required to be successful.

High-quality training is fostered when the objectives of the program are well-specified. *Well-specified objectives* send a message to participants about what is required to be successful and what they are supposed to be able to do after completing the program. Objectives should indicate skills to be acquired (rather than knowledge to be learned and should be tailored for each individual.

The training content should promote the skills needed in the workplace.

The training content should promote the *skills needed in the workplace*. Even for traditional basic skills, such as reading and math, the skills needed in the workplace differ from those taught in schools. For example, writing in school is often descriptive (e.g., creative writing) or conveys learned material (e.g., essays). Writing for work is far more task-oriented and includes such activities as filling out logs of activities and writing memoranda that describe a current situation.

Writing for work often requires synthesis and distillation of information, ordering information in a logical sequence, and making persuasive arguments.

SCANS calls for youth to be trained in foundation skills that go beyond traditional basic skills.

Further, as illustrated in Exhibit I-1, SCANS calls for youth to be trained in foundation skills that go beyond traditional basic skills to include thinking skills—such as decision-making, problem-solving, and learning how to learn—and personal qualities—such as responsibility, self-management, and sociability. Educational services may also address SCANS competencies, including competencies in resources, information, interpersonal skills, systems, and technology.

Educational skills should be taught in a functional context so youth can see how to apply them in the "real world."

High-quality educational services provide *training in a functional context* (i.e., contextual learning). The importance of this principle is recognized in the Goals 2000 amendments to the summer youth program which require that classroom training include, to the extent feasible, opportunities to apply knowledge and skills relating to academic subjects to the world of work.

Learning within a functional context is a powerful motivator.

The advantages of contextual learning are conceptually very clear. In traditional drill-and-practice approaches, youth very often have a hard time seeing the connection between what they are taught in school and their goals for life outside of school. Moreover, traditional settings and methods used to teach and test academic skills are often precisely the situations in which such individuals have had difficulty and experienced frustration in the past. By contrast, learning within a functional context is a powerful motivator and ensures that the skills being taught are relevant to the demands of the workplace.

Participants' progress in acquiring skills should be well documented, through ongoing assessment that involves participants in evaluating their own work.

As a further indicator of training quality, participants' *progress in acquiring skills should be well documented.* At a minimum this requires a valid pre-post comparison of participants' skills. Also, assessment should ideally be (a) ongoing and integrated into the instruction, (b) performance-based, using observations of participants' skills, and (c) involve participants in evaluating their own work and reflecting on their progress. Portfolio assessment methods can constitute a highly effective means of meeting these goals.

Exhibit I-1
The SCANS Foundation Skills
and Competencies

Foundation Skills

1. Basic Skills: Reading, writing, arithmetic/mathematics, listening, and speaking.
2. Thinking Skills: Creative thinking, decision making, problem solving, seeing things in the mind's eye, knowing how to learn, and reasoning.
3. Personal Qualities: Responsibility, self-esteem, sociability, self-management, and integrity/honesty.

Five Competencies

1. Resources: Identifies, organizes, plans, and allocates time, money, material and facilities, and human resources.
2. Interpersonal: Participates as a member of a team, teachers others new skills, serves clients and customers, exercises leadership, negotiates, and works with diversity.
3. Information: Acquires and evaluates information, organizes and maintains information, interprets and communicates information, and uses computers to process information.
4. Systems: Understands complex systems, monitors and corrects performance, and improves or designs systems.
5. Technology: Selects technology, applies technology to tasks, and maintains and troubleshoots equipment.

Relative to classroom-based training, work-based training offers both different opportunities and challenges to providing high-quality training.

The principles of high-quality educational training apply to both classroom-based training and work-based training. Work-based training, however, offers both different opportunities and challenges to providing high-quality training content. Work-based training clearly provides training in a functional context and offers good opportunities to assess and document participants' progress through observing them perform real-world tasks. SDAs, however, face significant challenges in (a) identifying appropriate worksites that can provide participants with real and meaningful work tasks, (b) identifying embedded opportunities to teach skills, (c) working with worksite supervisors to develop strategies to integrate work and learning, and (d) helping youth analyze and reflect on the skills being learned while the work is being completed. This Guide, therefore, presents alternative strategies that SDAs can use to develop such training.

Quality of Instruction

Active learning is a critical dimension to high-quality instruction.

A critical dimension of high-quality instruction is that it *promote active learning*. Many studies have demonstrated that when individuals are active in practicing a new skill or thinking about new information, they acquire the new skill or knowledge more readily than when they are just passively listening or responding in a rote fashion. Ideally, effective instruction also actively involves participants in defining the problems to be addressed, devising potential strategies to solve problems, applying skills in carrying out those strategies, and evaluating the effectiveness of their chosen strategies. Active learning of this type can be particularly important in teaching SCANS thinking skills.

Project-based instruction offers substantial opportunities for active learning as participants apply their skills in actual work tasks.

Work- or project-based instruction or programs that integrate work-based and classroom instruction can offer substantial opportunities for active learning as participants practice applying their skills in carrying out actual work tasks. Even in the more traditional classroom setting, active and interactive instruction can be achieved through many methods, including instructor-led discussions, one-on-one tutoring, role-playing, or practical exercises with instructor feedback. In these methods participants must act upon the new material and receive feedback from the instructor.

Another important aspect of high-quality instruction is that it *promote training for skill transfer and skill durability*. One of the distinguishing features of job-related basic skills is that workers need to be able to identify the appropriate skill for solving a particular job-related

problem. When participants learn a skill (e.g., how to calculate percentages) without understanding its purpose, it is not surprising if they cannot later use that skill on the job. High-quality programs, therefore, should not only teach new skills but should also teach participants how and when to apply those skills. Providing training in a functional context is an excellent way to foster training for skill transfer. Other training methods that enhance participants' ability to transfer their learned skills to new situations include:

High-quality instruction not only teaches new skills but also teaches participants how and when to apply those skills.

- Demonstrating the skill's effectiveness so that participants realize its benefits.
- Giving participants rules for when a skill should be used.
- Giving participants practice in when to apply specific skills in diverse contexts.
- Training participants to evaluate for themselves whether they are using the skills correctly.
- Continuing training beyond the point of initial mastery of the skill.

Another important dimension of high-quality instruction is that participants have sufficient *opportunities to learn*. This requires instruction that is of sufficient duration and intensity to, at a minimum, prevent summer learning loss and, ideally, improve participants' skills. It also requires that, while participating in the program, youth spend substantial "time on task," learning and practicing skills rather than engaging in irrelevant activities or waiting for instructors to check their work. Providing personal attention to each participant is another way to increase their opportunity to learn. The typically low student-teacher ratio in the Summer Youth program, compared with regular schools, means that individualized attention and instruction is more likely to occur.

Participants also need sufficient opportunities to learn and practice new skills.

Low student-teacher ratios may also make *adaptive instruction* more likely. Good instructors use students' questions and errors as opportunities for diagnosing the nature of the students' understanding of the material. They then adapt their instruction in light of the diagnosis. Instructors should also vary their presentation and content if students do not initially master the material. Having students repeat the same material until they get it right is very demoralizing to students and encourages them to simply memorize the right answers rather than master the underlying concepts.

Good teachers use students' questions and errors to diagnose the nature of students' understanding and adapt their instruction accordingly.

Finally, the instructors need to be *caring adults* who approach their tasks as "coaches" or mentors rather than "directors" of participants' activities. This is particularly important for work-based approaches, where supervisors may be unaccustomed to such a role.

OVERVIEW OF THIS GUIDE

Part A of this guide is intended primarily for SDA staff, especially Summer Youth Coordinators.

This Guide presents strategies that Summer Youth programs can use to implement these principles of high-quality educational services. This Guide is divided into two main parts, each with its own intended audience. *Part A: Getting Started* is intended primarily for SDA staff, especially Summer Youth Coordinators. The motivation for this section of the Guide stems from our observation that innovative, context-rich and project-based learning is typically only possible when SDAs take a strong leadership role in working with their service providers. Although there are noteworthy exceptions, providers, if left to their own devices, will often fall back on fairly traditional instructional approaches. SDAs, therefore, must convey the essence of enriched Summer Youth instruction and work with providers to improve their capacity to deliver quality educational services. Chapter II, the first section of this Part, suggests strategies that SDAs can use to make this happen.

We recognize too that an important part of the SDAs' leadership role must involve complying with the legislative directive for Title II-B that programs should provide an objective assessment for all participants and develop an individualized service strategy for them that identifies appropriate achievement objective and services. Given the tight time frame for the Summer Youth program, implementing these directives will indeed prove to be a challenge. Chapter III of this Guide, the second and final chapter of Part A, provides some examples of how SDAs might go about doing so.

Part B is directed at the practitioner audience, including classroom instructors and worksite supervisors.

Part B: Strategies for Summer Youth Instruction is directed at the practitioner audience, including classroom instructors and worksite supervisors. It provides step-by-step guidance on how to improve the content and instructional methods of the educational component of Summer Youth programs. Chapter IV, the first chapter in Part B, directly addresses DOL's mandate to "blur the distinction between work and learning" by offering guidance on how providers might transform their programs to develop project-based learning. Intended as a "cookbook approach," this chapter describes how projects might be chosen, how participants can be empowered to take ownership and

control of their project, and how mentors can ensure that the projects are learning-rich. Case study examples are provided at the chapter's conclusion.

Recognizing that project-based learning may not be feasible or desirable in all instances, Chapter V of the Guide offers guidance on how instructors can inculcate quality-training principles into more traditional classroom approaches to educational instruction. For example, short of introducing true project-based learning, more traditional programs can nonetheless borrow principles from the project-based model to ensure that learning is provided within a functionally relevant context, includes instruction in a range of SCANS skills and competencies, fosters active learning methods, and encourages students to take control of their own learning. Again, case study examples are provided.

II. THE ROLE OF SDA LEADERSHIP IN IMPROVING THE QUALITY OF EDUCATIONAL SERVICES

THE IMPORTANCE OF SDA LEADERSHIP

The model of high-quality SYETP services presented in Chapter I calls on SDAs to (1) provide meaningful work opportunities for young people; (2) develop functional, context-based educational services that are effective in teaching the full-range of skills that will be needed in the workplace—basic skills as well as SCANS skills; (3) help youth understand the relationships between the skills learned in an educational setting and skills applied on the job; and (4) build linkages between the summer and year-round education or work to help youth translate summer successes into continued success in school and at work.

SDAs that provided little specific direction to their providers encountered problems in ensuring high-quality programs.

In the past, SDAs have provided varying levels of direction in ensuring that their SYETP educational services meet these goals. Some SDAs have provided little specific direction in the design of their SYETP educational services. Some of these SDAs wanted to encourage diversity and innovation among their service providers. Other SDAs wanted to defer to the educational expertise of their providers (often the local school district) and depended on these providers to maintain high professional standards.

There are three disadvantages of this "laissez-faire" approach, however. First, it results in tremendous variation in the content and quality of the educational activities. Second, providers often design educational activities that are "traditional" and do not incorporate many of the features of high-quality services—such as providing education in a functional content or providing many opportunities for active learning. Third, service providers may not have any knowledge of strategies to promote links between work and learning or between the summer program and year-round education or work.

Other SDAs have provided limited direction in designing educational services. Although these SDAs may have been interested in promoting some of the educational content and instructional methods

in the model of high-quality services, these SDAs often were not be able to effectively communicate their vision for educational services to their providers. For example, in requests for proposals (RFPs) for the delivery of classroom-based services, these SDAs might have called for contextual learning, SCANS skills and links between work and learning, but simply assumed that service providers knew how to actualize them.

Finally, still other SDAs have exercised substantial direction in the design of educational services to promote high-quality content and instructional methods in their SYETP educational services. The Evaluation of the Summer Youth Employment and Training Programs found that educational programs consistently met the criteria of high-quality services only when SDAs provided substantial direction, which was required to overcome institutional inertia among providers.

Only when SDAs provided strong direction to providers were educational programs consistently of high quality.

Some SDAs that provided such strong direction tried to encourage service providers to develop strong classroom-based educational designs—sometimes referred to as "enriched classrooms." Other SDAs were committed to transforming traditional work-experience to incorporate educational content. Though these latter SDAs also promoted "enriched classrooms," they tended to view classroom-based education as a supplement to work-based learning, rather than as a complete educational activity in and of itself.

Regardless of these differences in emphasis, the SDAs that offered substantial direction frequently communicated with their service providers about both the "big picture" educational objectives of the summer program and the details of individual project design.

The remainder of this chapter draws from examples of SDAs that provided substantial direction and describes in detail strategies these SDAs used to effectively increase the quality of SYETP educational services.

CHALLENGES TO PROVIDING EFFECTIVE LEADERSHIP

To play a strong leadership role, SDAs must be able to address several challenges.

- Selecting providers committed to delivering high-quality services.
- Developing the capacity of selected providers to provide high-quality services.
- Overseeing the quality of educational services.
- Encouraging effective transitions from SYETP.

Below we describe the strategies that SDAs included in the Evaluation of the Summer Youth Employment and Training Programs used to address these challenges.

SELECTING PROVIDERS COMMITTED TO DELIVERING HIGH-QUALITY SERVICES

Selecting service providers that are committed to delivering high-quality educational services is a critical step. SDAs can use the selection process to communicate the educational concepts promoted by the SDA. Contractual arrangements can also influence service providers' willingness to take a non-traditional approach to curriculum design and instructional methods.

Selecting providers that are committed to delivering high-quality educational services is a critical step.

SDAs can use three strategies to select providers of high-quality educational services: provide educational services directly, select providers through a competitive process, or select providers through sole source agreements. Although each of these approaches offers advantages and disadvantages, the SDA can use each method to influence the quality of SYETP educational services.

Influencing Educational Components by Providing Services Directly

In some cases, SDAs can provide educational services directly. The advantage of this approach is that the SDA can exert the greatest control over the type of educational services provided. The disadvantage, however, is that SDA staff often lacks the expertise needed to develop curricula and deliver high-quality instruction.

One strategy is for the SDA to provide services directly, but this presents some difficulties.

Because SDA staff may have limited instructional experience, therefore, most SDAs using this strategy provide educational services through computer-aided instruction at the SDA office or in a central

location. Staff paid directly by the SDA instruct students in using the computers and answer students' questions. Computer-aided instruction can provide some elements of high-quality educational services, including self-paced instruction and instruction tailored to the specific learning needs of each student. Further, some software packages use work-related functional context for instruction. However, as discussed in detail in Chapter IV, computer-aided instruction provides substantially less opportunity for students to develop critical thinking and teamwork skills. Thus this approach cannot provide many of the elements of high-quality educational services.

Another approach to providing services directly is for the SDA to develop "partnerships" with schools and other educational providers to provide educational activities. This approach allows the SDA to retain substantial control over educational services but increases the instructional expertise available. Under this approach, the SDA remains the fiscal agent for the educational activity and directly employs the educational staff, but the educational partner helps develop the instructional material and "lends" skilled instructors to the SDA for the summer.

Partnerships between the SDA and educational providers may be an alternative.

Example of Providing Educational Services Directly

Example #1—Establishing Ongoing Collaboration between SDAs and Service Providers. This SDA played the role of the fiscal agent for all its providers and "co-sponsored" projects with a wide range of providers. Because it did not use a competitive process to select providers, this SDA communicated with its providers informally, using one-on-one conversations at all stages of project development. Sometimes the SDA took the lead role in project development and curriculum design, and sometimes the co-sponsoring agency took the lead role. **Balance of Maricopa SDA, Phoenix, Arizona**

Influencing Educational Components through the Competitive Process

SDAs can also exert substantial influence on the educational services through a competitive process. As illustrated by the examples below, SDAs can communicate their desired approaches at several critical junctures in the Request for Proposal (RFP) process—before issuing the RFP, when selecting providers, and when writing contracts with the service provider.

SDAs can use several junctures in the RFP process to influence providers.

Examples of Using the RFP Process to Influence the Quality of Services

Example #1—Communicating the SDA's Desired Approach through the RFP Process. This SDA clearly communicated its desired approach to the summer program during the RFP process in three ways. First, before issuing the RFP, the SDA held a half-day "Confab" for all interested Title II-B proposers to explain its philosophy for program design. Proposers were briefed on the direction of the summer program and given information on creating "special initiative projects," non-traditional work experience in which crews of youth complete an outcome-based project. The SDA promoted community involvement and allowed time for proposers to brainstorm creative projects and develop linkages with other organizations in the community. The service providers that attended the Confab meeting felt that it was the most informative meeting they had ever had concerning Title II-B. The providers felt that the SDA had a definite direction and clearly communicated with them so that they all could work toward a common outcome.

Second, the SDA issued the RFP two weeks after the Confab. The RFP reiterated the desired direction and outlined the specific requirements of each component. Third, one week after the release of the RFP, the SDA held a bidders' conference at which staff outlined specific requirements and answered questions concerning the program design issues. **Department of Employment & Training, Providence, Rhode Island**

Example #2—Negotiating Desired Changes during the Proposal Process. This SDA used its RFP to communicate what types of educational programs it wanted and what the content of those programs should be. Although the SDA accepted a few proposals as written, in most cases the SDA negotiated with potential providers to improve the quality of the proposed services. The SDA critiqued program approaches and curriculum, noted where strengthening was needed, and insisted that changes occur before a contract was written. **New Directions, New Bedford, Massachusetts**

Example #3—Developing a Team of Youth Providers for Titles II-B and II-C. This SDA used a single integrated RFP for "Comprehensive Youth Employability Development Programs" to select providers for Title II-B and Title II-C programs. To promote long-term cooperation among the selected providers and encourage providers to work together with the PIC as a "team," the providers that were selected did not need to compete again for four years. **Seattle/King County PIC, Seattle, Washington**

Influencing the Educational Component through Sole Source Arrangements

Even when SDAs select educational providers through sole source arrangements, they can use initial contract negotiations to influence how educational services are provided.

SDAs can develop long-term relationships with schools through sole source agreements.

SDAs most often use sole source arrangements to select school districts or vocational-technical schools to provide educational services. SDAs that worked solely with schools as educational service providers identified a number of benefits from this arrangement, including:

- Greater ability to provide classroom-based educational services to the largest number of SYETP participants.
- Cost savings through in-kind contributions by the schools.
- Greater ability to secure school credit for the summer educational activities.
- Facilitation of linkages between the summer program and school programs.

SDAs can use the sole source arrangement to influence the quality of educational services by demanding more services and setting higher expectations based on long-standing relationships with a sole source provider.

Developing the Capacity to Provide High-Quality Services

Another important method of encouraging providers to offer appropriate services is to build their capacity to do so. Many highly effective SDAs make considerable efforts to train their staff and service providers in the principles of high-quality educational services.

The short-term nature of SYETP and limited resources pose challenges to capacity building.

SDAs and providers face two challenges in training staff. First, often temporary staff are hired for summer programs. As a result, not only must the staff be trained each year, but staff need to be hired in time for them to participate in training as well as complete the job development and participant recruitment tasks required before the summer starts. Second, SDAs and providers must find the resources to fund training.

"Summer Beginnings" provides a model for extensive training in work-based learning.

Among the SDAs that were visited for this study, those that provided extensive training to staff and providers received technical assistance as part of the DOL-funded "Summer Beginnings" project. Each was a large, urban SDA that transformed between 15% and 20% of its overall SYETP service offerings from traditional work experience to work-based learning during the summer. These SDAs realized that encouraging work-based learning required a fundamentally new orientation to both education and work experience. They provided substantial technical assistance to their large cadres of SYETP providers, including both educational providers and work experience providers.

Effective technical assistance starts before the RFP is issued and continues throughout the summer.

Early in the planning cycle for the summer, prior to the issuance of an RFP, these SDAs and their prospective providers discussed the overall principles and design concepts and brainstormed about possible project designs. During subsequent stages, after contracts were awarded, these SDAs—with help from outside technical assistance staff—provided training to summer instructors and work supervisors to help them implement the intended designs and maintain on-going linkages between work-based and classroom-based activities.

Rather than dictating program models to providers, each of these SDAs tried to educate service providers about a new way of thinking about education so the providers could "take ownership" of their new educational designs.

Example of Providing Technical Assistance to Service Providers

Example #1—Communicating Desired Approach to Providers through Technical Assistance. This SDA used several approaches to support its providers in developing services that linked work and learning using the SCANS framework, without specifying a specific program design. Through its participation as a Summer Beginnings demonstration site, the SDA and its providers received DOL-sponsored technical assistance about how to develop enriched classrooms and work-based learning. As a first step in "spreading the word" about Summer Beginnings, the SDA disseminated written information from Brandeis' Summer Field Kit and Johns Hopkins' descriptions of work-based learning in office and maintenance settings. At the beginning of the summer, the SDA arranged for a representative from Johns Hopkins to visit every SYETP contractor and a sample of worksites to identify the learning opportunities in summer jobs.

Because many of the case managers, teachers, and worksite supervisors/crew leaders involved in the summer program were hired as temporary staff by the providers each year, this SDA saw capacity-building among provider staff as an ongoing need. The SDA conducted training sessions for provider staff each summer, and supported its contractors in their own staff training and development efforts. The content of the training provided by the SDA included detailed descriptions of SCANS skills and the local I*CANS conceptual framework, as well as practice exercises teaching staff how to assess skills, analyze the skills embedded in different work experience tasks, and develop portfolios to document skills attainment.

To encourage providers to provide additional capacity building and staff training for summer staff, the SDA required providers to set aside 10% of their contract funds to improve program design and effectiveness. These funds could not be used for administrative staff or payments to program participants. Instead, these funds could be used to pay the teachers or worksite supervisors for participating in staff development/training activities, or to pay classroom teachers to increase their awareness of worksite opportunities for learning on the job. As a result, one provider gave classroom teachers 15 hours per week to spend at the summer worksites to improve their ability to coordinate classroom-based learning with work-site activities. **Seattle/King County PIC, Seattle, Washington**

OVERSEEING THE QUALITY OF EDUCATIONAL SERVICES

Effective oversight requires monitoring the quality of services as well whether providers are in compliance.

SDAs can also influence the quality of educational services through their oversight activities. This can be challenging for many SDAs primarily because it demands substantial staff time and a strong knowledge on the part of monitoring staff about what constitutes a "quality" program. Although it is easier to monitor that service providers are complying with federal regulations, it is much harder to judge whether a service provider is administering a good youth-serving program that incorporates the principles of high-quality training.

Approaches that SDAs used to monitor program quality include:

- Contacting the program frequently so that monitors become familiar with the program and can help address problems as they arise.
- Fostering a cooperative relationship between program staff and monitors so that monitors are viewed as a resource for assistance.
- Interviewing participants so that monitors can assess the learning that is occurring.

Examples of Overseeing Quality of Services

Example #1—Using SDA Staff to Monitor Educational Services. This SDA monitors 100% of its programs at least once. From three out-stationed field offices, SDA staff provide on-going monitoring and technical assistance support throughout the summer. The youth program monitor received several calls weekly from providers to discuss program implementation options unrelated to compliance issues. **Department of Employment & Training, Providence, Rhode Island**

Example #2—Using Counselors to Monitor Service Quality. In this SDA, counselors, all of whom are SDA employees, monitored the quality of providers' educational service. One of the counselors' duties was to keep close tabs on each young person's summer experiences—Are they positive? Is the youth learning anything? Are there complaints or praises? The counselors did a good job in the role of solving major youth-centered problems and identifying situations that compromised the quality of the educational services. **New Directions, New Bedford, Massachusetts**

Example #3--Using Students' Subsequent School Performance to Assess Providers. This PIC required follow-up reports at the end of the first school quarter in the fall for the participants served by each provider. This report included information on students' attendance, performance in school, grades, and general attitude and behavior. This information was used to assess its providers' performance. **PIC 5, Annandale, Minnesota**

FACILITATING EFFECTIVE TRANSITIONS FROM SYETP

The SYETP is by its very nature a short-term program. To fully meet the goals of helping youth stem their learning losses, therefore, SYETP needs to communicate with schools about participants' learning experiences so that the schools can sustain and build upon those experiences. Further, many SYETP participants can benefit from additional JTPA services such as from the Title II-C program during the school year. Thus, SDAs need to develop linkages with schools and year-round programs to encourage effective transitions from the SYETP.

Facilitating Transition Back to School

Although many SDAs have developed close relationships with schools at the "front end" of the summer program to generate referrals and obtain information about youths' academic standing and test scores, their linkages with the schools at the conclusion of the summer are often substantially weaker.

Developing strong linkages with schools after the summer requires substantial effort.

Although SDA and provider staff may be eager to establish procedures to communicate with schools about the progress that SYETP participants had made over the course of the summer, schools often lack interest in obtaining feedback from SYETP. Even when SDAs routinely distribute information on individual participants' end-of-summer test results and learning gains to the schools, most that we visited did not think the schools made much use of this information beyond entering it into the students' permanent files.

One approach to overcoming schools' lack of interest is to "market" the effectiveness of the SYETP program to schools. For example, SDAs can provide schools with aggregate numbers that document the types of students served, the average learning gains achieved during the program and the number of youth who experienced no learning losses. Other SDAs develop ongoing relationships with

Demonstrating the effectiveness of the SYETP program can help "market" it to schools.

specific counselors and teachers, who see the value of the SYETP program and thus use the results to document students' achievements.

Another approach is for SDAs to provide schools with a "portfolio" for each SYETP participant that documents students achievements in writing and other basic skills as well as SCANS-related skills, such as leadership and team work. This approach is particularly fruitful in areas where the state requires that schools maintain students' portfolios because it helps schools meet their mandates.

By maintaining "portfolios" of their accomplishments, students can demonstrate to schools what they have learned during the summer.

A third approach is to arrange for schools to give students credit for successfully completing the program. This approach also helps youth see the value of what they are learning in the summer.

Arranging for school credit for SYETP educational programs makes it easier for both schools and participants to see the value of the summer experience.

Examples of Facilitating Transitions to Schools

Example #1—Providing Schools with Evidence of SYETP Achievements. This SDA co-sponsored a number of different educational activities with various schools for which the schools granted academic credit. At the end of the summer, the SDA provided these schools with aggregate program-level results summarizing test score improvements for the participating youth. This information helped "market" the effectiveness of SYETP as well as helping schools assess the effectiveness of their educational designs and plan improvements for the next summer. **Balance of Maricopa SDA, Phoenix, Arizona**

Example #2—Providing Schools with Portfolios Documenting Participants' Achievements. This SDA prepared a portfolio that included SYETP assessment information as well as the individual service plan for all youth who received classroom-based services during the summer. The SDA staff hand-delivered these portfolios to school counselors at the beginning of the school year and encouraged them to use the information to assist the SYETP participants during the regular school year. **Hoosier Falls PIC, Jefferson, Indiana**

Example #3—Facilitating Two-Way Communication with School Staff. This SDA used personal contacts with school counselors or individual classroom teachers to help facilitate a smooth transition from the summer to school for SYETP participants. This SDA asked its Title II-B staff to complete an end-of-program report at the end of the first academic quarter after the summer. To prepare this report, SYETP staff talked to school staff regarding participants' school performance, behavior, and attitudes toward school and also provided information to the schools about youths' summer experiences. **PIC 5, Annandale, Minnesota**

Facilitating Transitions Between SYETP and Year-Round JTPA Services

Achieving an integrated network of year-round services is challenging because of differences in targeting and service delivery and because of limited funding.

Although many SYETP youth also enroll in Title II-C programs, in many SDAs the relationships between the summer and year-round programs often fall far short of the integrated network of year-round services specified in our model of high-quality SYETP services. Factors that inhibit systematic linkages between the services funded under Title II-B and Title II-C include the facts that (1) many SDAs use their Title II-C programs to serve out-of-school youth, while they use Title II-B programs for in-school youth; (2) individual service providers often play a major role in recruiting and enrolling participants in Title II-C programs and these providers are often different from the providers used for the summer program; and (3) because funding for Title II-C programs is limited, only a small proportion of SYETP youth can be enrolled in Title II-C.

Strategies include combining II-B and II-C funding and developing multi-year SYETP services.

One approach to improving coordination is to fund providers of "continuous" year-round youth services by combining Title II-B and Title II-C funds to support the integrated program. Another approach is to plan multi-year SYETP services, in which participants are expected in enroll in SYETP in several summers. Title II-C funds can then be used to "bridge" the gap between summer services.

Examples of Facilitating the Transition to Year-Round Services

Example #1—Providing Three Years of Continuous Service. This SDA funded several projects that provided year-round services. For example, one drop-out prevention project provided up to three years of summer services to at-risk youth. The program provided school credit toward promotion into the next grade for those who successfully completed summer activities. In addition, participants received "bridge services" during the school year which were funded by Title II-C. The goal of this component was to achieve a remained in school rate of 85%.

To provide ongoing support from September through June, all participants were assigned a mentor who was responsible for addressing students' needs during the school year. Examples of mentoring activities include (1) home visits; (2) meetings with students, parents, and guidance counselors; (3) tutorial session; and (4) referral to other services. In addition, participants could receive other Title II-C services, such as preemployment/work maturity training. **New Directions, New Bedford, Massachusetts**

Example #2—Funding Multi-Year SYETP Programs. This SDA provided multiple-year services to many SYETP participants and used services funded under Title II-C during the intervening school year. As part of the intensive case management services provided with Title II-C funds, "youth advocates" regularly contacted youth, parents, and teachers, as well as other relevant service organizations, to ensure that youth had a successful school year. **Baltimore City SDA, Baltimore, Maryland**

Example #3—Funding Combined Title II-B/Title II-C Projects that Target At-Risk In-School Youth. This SDA operated a relatively small Title II-C program targeted primarily (70%) to out-of-school youth (high school dropouts). The SDA wanted the Title II-B program to operate as the gateway to or continuation of the Title II-C services when possible. The SDA strongly urged providers to enroll any Title II-C participants for whom summer work experience was appropriate in the Title II-B program. One of the summer youth providers targeted its summer youth program to out-of-school youth and enrolled most of these participants in Title II-C services either before, after, or during their enrollment in the Title II-B. **Seattle/King County PIC, Seattle, Washington**

III. ACTIVITIES IN SUPPORT OF TRAINING

Consistent with the 1992 JTPA amendments, Summer Youth programs must provide, within the very restricted summer time frame, a broad array of services in support of training. These services should be meaningful, linked to year-round activities, client-centered, and should include recruitment, service planning, supportive services, and case management. Further, in keeping with the amendments, SYETP systems are required to assess young people's basic skills levels and supportive service needs.

In this chapter we discuss the challenges that SDAs face and strategies they use to address those challenges in three areas: targeting and recruiting appropriate youth, assessing youths' skills and developing individual service strategies, and providing responsive case management.

A. TARGETING AND RECRUITING YOUTH

CHALLENGES

Because the SYETP eligible population far exceeds the services available, SDAs can serve only a small proportion of those eligible. Although SDAs can resolve their capacity constraints by offering SYETP services to eligible youth on a first-come-first-serve basis, SDAs that target specific youth can more effectively ensure that they use their limited resources to meet their SYETP goals.

Although many SDAs serve youth on a first-come-first-served basis, those that target specific youth can better meet their SYETP goals with limited resources.

This guide, therefore, encourages SDAs to define appropriate target groups and develop ways to effectively recruit targeted youth. To do so, SDAs must address the following challenges:

- Targeting SYETP services—particularly educational services—to appropriate youth.
- Developing effective methods to recruit targeted youth into SYETP services.

TARGETING YOUTH FOR SYETP SERVICES

Participants slated for educational services are often targeted as part of a two step process. First, SDAs often develop targeting criteria to determine who among eligible youth should be enrolled in SYETP. Next, among those enrolled, SDAs must decide who will receive educational services as opposed to only traditional work experience.

Many SDAs target SYETP services to youth designated in the Title II-C guidelines as having barriers to attaining their educational and employment goals.

Targeting Youth for General SYETP Services

SDAs can designate target groups for all SYETP services, including both educational services and work experience. Most often, SDAs identify groups that they consider hard to serve or most in need of services. Many SDAs use the guidelines in the JTPA Title II-C regulations, which give preference to youth with barriers to attaining their educational and employment goals. SDAs have also identified target groups of youth they see are particularly appropriate for SYETP services. Target groups identified by case study sites included youth with one or more barriers listed below.

- Drop-outs.
- Youth enrolled in drop-out prevention programs.
- Youth already enrolled in Title II-C programs.
- Former offenders.
- Former substance abusers.
- Youth with disabilities.
- Youth living in foster care or orphanages.
- Youth from migrant families.

For SDAs that identify many characteristics to target, one approach is to develop a scoring system to summarize all the targeted characteristics and thus identify youth who are "most in need." These SDAs can assign points to specific barriers and give the highest priority to youth with the highest score. An example of such a scoring system is presented below.

Some SDAs combine multiple characteristics to identify youth "most in need."

Example of a Scoring System to Target Youth in Need of SYETP Services

Example #1—Targeting Youth with Multiple Barriers. This SDA developed a point system to rate each SYETP applicant. These points were based on the number of barriers each person possessed, including those relating to school status and family circumstances. For example, a young person who was below grade level in reading and whose family received public assistance and had more than five family members would receive three points. Participants with more than five points total were considered "Priority One" for SYETP services. **Upper Rio Grande PIC, El Paso, Texas**

Targeting Youth for Educational Services

SYETP regulations state that the SYETP experience should be "infused with academic enrichment" so that participants can acquire life-long skills. The challenge, however, is for SYETP programs to decide which youth should receive educational services from among those they enroll.

First, SDAs need to decide whether to provide educational services to all SYETP participants or only to those with specific characteristics. Some SDAs believe that all youth, regardless of their educational attainment or level of basic skills, should receive some form of educational services. SDAs cited two advantages to providing educational services to all participants.

Some SDAs provide educational services to all SYETP youth because they believe that all youth can benefit from educational services and the stigma of receiving remedial services is reduced.

- All SYETP youth can benefit from services to reduce the learning loss that often occurs during the summer. Some SDAs believed that providing educational activities to all youth reinforced year-round skills.
- The stigma of receiving educational services is reduced. Some SDAs found that targeting educational services to those with academic deficiencies made those youth feel "set apart" from other students and resentful. Providing educational services to all youth made educational services more acceptable.

The disadvantage to providing educational services to all youth, however, is that it reduces the amount that can be spend per participant, thus reducing the length and intensity of educational services.

To target limited resources to those most at risk of learning loss during the summer, other SDAs target those with basic skills deficiencies.

A second approach is to target specific SYETP participants for educational services. Most commonly, case study SDAs targeted youth with basic skills deficiencies. Some SDAs used the definition of "basic skills deficient" contained in the legislation (i.e. reading and math levels at or below the 8th grade level.) Examples of other ways in which SDAs defined "deficiency" include:

- Youth scoring below a specific grade level in reading and math tests.
- Youth considered "behind a grade level" or "behind in math and reading" as indicated on their school records.

The advantage of this approach is that scarce resources are used to serve those most in need of educational services and most at-risk of learning loss during the summer. The disadvantage is the potential stigma resulting from singling out youth as deficient, discussed above.

Targeting educational services to those under 16 allows SDAs to serve youth for whom work experience may not be feasible and can be an effective dropout prevention strategy.

The other common targeting strategy is to provide educational services to younger participants, typically those age fourteen and fifteen. The advantages of this approach are that it allows the SDA to serve younger individuals for whom work experience may be more difficult to arrange, and it can be an effective drop-out prevention strategy. There are, however, some disadvantages to this strategy, including:

- Older youth who have a need for educational services are not served.
- Not all younger youth need remedial educational services and some may benefit from work experience instead.

RECRUITING YOUTH INTO SYETP

The next challenge is to recruit targeted youth into the summer program. SDAs first need to decide how to divide the responsibility for recruitment tasks between the SDA and its service providers. By explicitly identifying responsibilities up front, SDAs and providers will be better able to coordinate services and predict recruitment outcomes.

The first step is deciding whether the SDA or its providers should recruit youth; both approaches offer some advantages.

The advantages of having the SDA recruit participants are twofold: (a) the SDA is more likely to have the resources and staff expertise to handle a high volume of applicants, and (b) the SDA can more easily control the quality of the targeting and recruitment efforts. On the other hand, the advantages of having service providers recruit youth are: (a) providers such as schools and community-based organizations may have closer ties to at-risk youth, and (b) service providers are better aware of their services and requirements and may be better able to select youth appropriate for their program.

Regardless of which agency is responsible for recruitment, three strategies are commonly used to inform targeted youth about appropriate services: developing recruitment linkages with schools, networking with other organizations, and advertising.

Using Schools as "Recruiting Lifelines"

Many SDAs find that using schools as their primary recruitment source also facilitates post-program linkages between SYETP and schools.

Many SDAs use schools as the primary source of recruitment. The advantages of linking with schools are that (a) schools can easily provide youth with information about SYETP, (b) schools can actively identify appropriate youth, (c) schools can provide the SDA with school records for recruited youth to help target educational services, and (d) recruitment linkages also facilitate developing post-program linkages between SYETP and schools.

But SDAs that are serious about targeting out-of-school youth need to develop alternative recruitment sources as well.

A clear disadvantage, however, is that SYETP can only recruit in-school youth through schools. This is an obvious point, but several case study SDAs that indicated they targeted both in-school and out-of-school youth, in fact, only recruited through schools. As a result, the vast majority of their participants were in-school youth. SDAs that are serious about serving out-of-school youth need to adopt alternative strategies to recruit those youth, such as linkages with other agencies, as described in the next section.

SDAs can use the schools to enhance recruitment into SYETP in two ways. First, SDAs can use schools as a vehicle to make youth aware of SYETP services. Examples of this approach include:

At a minimum, SDAs can link with schools to make youth aware of SYETP services.

- Distributing flyers and posters throughout the schools and making presentations in classrooms.
- Broadcasting announcements of SYETP services through the school intercom.
- Asking schools to mail letters to parents whose children receive free lunches and to at-risk youth enrolled in special programs.
- Visiting schools regularly. One case study site attributed its recruitment success to regularly scheduled meetings between SDA staff and school districts and school staff.

Second, SDAs can include schools as active partners in the recruiting process. SDAs that included schools in the recruitment process found that communication with schools improved, and SDA staff were able to establish more effective linkages with schools—both recruitment and post-program linkages. Examples of active school involvement in the recruitment process include:

Ideally, schools can be more active partners in recruiting appropriate youth into SYETP.

- Soliciting referrals of at-risk youth from school staff. SDAs can have guidance counselors and teachers recommend youth who could benefit from SYETP services. Several case study SDAs specifically asked the guidance counselors making the referrals to outline each student's educational barriers and basic skills deficiencies.
- Designating special staff from schools to handle SYETP referrals. Some case study SDAs found that having the schools designate one person to handle SYETP referrals increased the schools' awareness of SYETP services and facilitated referrals.

Examples of Involving Schools as Active Recruitment Partners

Example #1:—Gaining District Support. This SDA asked the school district official to recommend eligible youth who would benefit from SYETP. In most cases, when young people expressed interest in a summer job, the school suggested the Summer Youth program. The district supported SYETP's goals and believed that all students could benefit in some way from the program. The district gladly referred young people to SYETP, which district officials saw as a positive alternative to students "roaming the streets." **Balance of Maricopa SDA, Phoenix, Arizona**

Example #2:—Obtaining Written Referrals from Schools. This SDA succeeded in getting written recommendations from school staff about youth appropriate for SYETP. The SDA started recruitment in April and provided enough information to school staff to make sure they understood the goals of SYETP (e.g. the types of students targeted). The SDA also asked schools to advertise SYETP throughout the campus and requested a list of students recommended for enrichment classes. The SDA staff also visited schools directly and answered questions from the school staff and the students. **ADEC, Montgomery, Alabama**

Example #3—Designating Special School Staff to Handle SYETP Referrals. This SDA designated a "point person" at the school for the summer program. This person offered assistance to youth applying to SYETP and provided a package of information that included maps to the SDA office, a checklist of documentation requirements, and a letter from the counselor indicating the referral. **Upper Rio Grande PIC, El Paso, Texas**

Networking with Other Organizations

The second strategy in recruiting target youth is coordinating with other agencies and organizations to publicize SYETP services and obtain referrals. One important source of referrals is other JTPA programs. SDAs can visit Title II-A classrooms, for example, to reach the parents of eligible youth. This method also allows the SYETP to better coordinate with other JTPA programs. The Employment Service and social service agencies are other public agencies that can refer eligible youth interested in SYETP services. Community-based organizations that serve youth are also a common recruitment source.

Other JTPA programs are an important referral source, as are ES, social service agencies, and community-based organizations.

As with schools, SDAs can use these other agencies to advertise their services, but more effective linkages involve these agencies as active partners that seek out and refer youth appropriate for SYETP services.

Examples of Networking with Other Agencies and Organizations

Example #1—Developing a Youth Advisory Board. This SDA compiled a Youth Advisory Board to participate in recruitment efforts. The Board—which consisted of the local school board members and staff from schools, the welfare agency, vocational rehabilitation, and Employment Service—convened regularly to share recruitment ideas. Members of each agency were asked by the SDA to "get the word out" by putting up posters and distributing brochures. **Lee County PIC, Ft. Meyers, Florida**

Example #2—Working Jointly with Several Agencies. In this SDA, the staff visited local labor camps and health care clinics to recruit youth from migrant farming families. The staff at these camps and assisted with the recruitment process. **NE Washington Rural Resources, Colville, Washington**

Example #3—Garnering Support From Several Local Agencies. This SDA used several resources to reach youth. It not only set up field offices to reach eligible participants, but also established "field teams" scattered throughout selected sites where targeted youth were most likely to "hang out." These sites included the Housing Authority, the Board of Education and Schools, and Special Intake Services. At the Housing Authority, the team provided special on-site intake services to residents in the housing developments; the Board of Education and Schools handled programs for youth with disabilities; and Special Intake Services handled intake for providers who served unique populations, such as art students who needed to undergo a special screening process. **Mayor's Office of Chicago, Chicago, Illinois**

Advertising SYETP Services

SDAs can also make youth aware of SYETP services through advertising. For example, SDAs can advertise on the radio—either paying for ads or arranging for public service announcements—and in the local newspapers. In one SDA, the staff appeared on radio and talk shows to reach a broad spectrum of youth.

SDAs can use paid advertisements and public service announcements to reach targeted youth.

Example of Using Advertising to Recruit Youth

Example #1—Relying on Advertising to Reach Youth. This SDA did not focus its recruitment efforts in schools or other agencies; instead, it relied on the media to reach youth. It advertised on radios, sponsored commercials on television and radio, and printed articles in local newspapers. This strategy reached a broad spectrum of youth. **Central SDA, Oklahoma City, Oklahoma**

B. ASSESSMENT AND SERVICE PLANNING

CHALLENGES

In keeping with the SYETP legislation, all participants are required to undergo an objective assessment process that will later inform the service planning. In addition, as part of the 1992 JTPA amendments, SDAs are required to develop assessment systems that are client-centered, comprehensive, and linked to services. These requirements pose a challenge to SYETP systems because programs typically have to assess and assign services to a high volume of participants in a short time frame. Most SYETP systems also find it difficult to develop an individualized service strategy (ISS) that is tailored to the specific needs and strengths of participants.

To provide adequate assessment services to SYETP participants and develop appropriate service plans, SDAs need to meet these challenges:

- Providing adequate assessment in a limited time frame.
- Using the Individual Services Strategy (ISS) as a strategic planning document.
- Applying assessment results to service planning.

Providing Adequate Assessment in a Limited Time Frame

Because they must assess a high volume of participants in a short period of time, SDAs need to be efficient by deciding exactly what they need to know and how they will use the information.

Providing adequate assessment has proven to be a challenge for many SDAs. Because of the high volume of participants enrolling in a short period of time, SDAs need to make sure that their assessment procedures are efficient. Thus, SDAs need to decide what information is needed and how it will be used in service planning. Assessment results should provide sufficient information about the participant to determine which services are required to meet the participant's needs but should not unduly burden the participant or SDA staff.

Assessing Basic Skills

By assessing participants' basic skills at enrollment, SDAs can better target educational services, assess participants' progress, and tailor services to teach the skills that participants need.

SYETP regulations require that all programs assess participants' basic skills at enrollment. Measuring basic skills serves several purposes, including: (1) determining whether youth should received educational remediation, (2) establishing a baseline against which progress during the summer can be gauged, and (3) allowing programs to tailor their services to teach the skills needed by participants.

SDAs can use the following two approaches to assessing basic skills:

- *School records.* School records are useful in identifying youth with basic skills deficits because they are current and, in many cases, come from the service providers themselves—the schools. Programs with access to schools' records are often able to coordinate efforts closely with schools, which in turn allows schools to become more involved in the SYETP process. Sites often use school records to supplement more formal assessment tools.
- *Formal paper and pencil tests.* Most sites use paper and pencil tests to measure basic skills because it is efficient, inexpensive, and objective. So that the results are valid, however, SDAs using paper and pencil tests need to be mindful of the testing environment (e.g., ensuring it is quite and free from distractions). SDAs also need to reassure youth that the tests are a way of ensuring appropriate services and measuring their progress, rather than a hurdle they must overcome to get into the program.

Assessing Supportive Service Needs

Many SDAs do not assess supportive services needs, even though it is required.

Even though assessment of supportive service needs is required by SYETP legislation, many case study SDAs did not assess these needs. In fact, one site indicated that it did not like to "broadcast the availability of supportive services" because of limited funding.

Receiving appropriate supportive services can make the difference between a participant's success and failure during the summer.

This guide recommends, however, that all SYETP systems assess participants' need for supportive services. Not only is such an assessment required, but appropriate supportive services can also determine participants' success or failure in SYETP. Most commonly, supportive services are restricted to transportation assistance and day care support, but it is recommended that SDAs make available other supportive services—either directly or through referrals to other agencies—to enable participants to successfully complete the program.

SDAs can use one of the following approaches to assess supportive service needs:

- *Informal interviews*. SDAs can conduct informal interviews during the early stages of the service planning about the participant's circumstances—such as residency, transportation needs, and child care needs—to determine which supportive services are appropriate.
- *Self-reporting*. As part of the written applications for SYETP services, SDAs can request information on barriers to participation and ways to address these barriers. However, although this method provides the needed information, it does not foster communication between the youth and SYETP staff.

Example of Assessing Supportive Service Needs

Example #1—Assessing Comprehensive Supportive Service Needs. During intake, this SDA assessed several areas to determine supportive service needs including: family situation (to determine child care needs), economic situation, homelessness, and whether the individual needed medical attention. The assessment of supportive service needs not only allowed SYETP staff to identify special needs, but it also affected to which program the applicant was referred, based on the program's ability to provide such services directly or to coordinate and follow-up on referrals to other agencies. **Mayor's Office of Chicago, Chicago, Illinois**

Assessing Occupational Interests

Assessing occupational interests can help SYETP place participants in appropriate work experience positions.

Most youth participants needed substantial help in determining their educational and employment goals, especially those youth from challenging home and other personal situations. Although not required by the legislation, helping youth determine their career goals is also beneficial because (1) it can help the SYETP program place participants in appropriate work experience positions, and (2) it can help the participants start to see the link between their SYETP experiences and the work place.

Informal assessment methods may provide sufficient information about occupational interests.

Many SDAs have access to formal tools to assess occupational interests and aptitudes that can be used for SYETP participants. However, less formal methods may provide sufficient information to meet the purposes of the SYETP program. For example, one case study SDA designed a mock job application that asked young people to list their interests and experiences. The questionnaire included several sections, including (1) work history and job functions; (2) what they liked and disliked on previous jobs, (3) a list of preferred job characteristics, such as "I like working with small children" and "I want a job that allows me to be creative."

Examples of Assessing Occupational Interests

Example #1—Integrating Interest Assessment in the Intake Interview. This SDA offered work experience as one of the main SYETP activities. As part of the intake process, the SYETP staff established two important criteria for enrollment: occupational interests and previous work experience. To determine which participants were appropriate for work experience, young people were interviewed by a case manager once they were deemed eligible. These interviews included an assessment of occupational interests, previous work experiences, skills, barriers, and training and supportive service needs. The information was then used to place youth in jobs that matched their interest profile. **SDA 7, Waterloo, Iowa**

Example #2—Completing a Job Interest Survey. This SDA used a survey that assisted SYETP staff in matching youth to services, and also helped youth clarify their long-term goals. The one-page survey asked if participants preferred to work indoors or outdoors, and included a checklist of various occupations. Young people were to rank their choices. SYETP staff then went over the form with the participants. This survey, along with other basic skills, assessment results, promoted a dialogue between the staff and the participant. **City of Houston Job Training Partnership, Houston, Texas**

Assessing Pre-Employment/Work Maturity Skills

SDAs can also assess participants' pre-employment/work maturity skills to better inform service planning. Assessment of these skills is especially helpful in determining which participants are suitable for specific work experience assignments. Below we present some examples of SDAs that have developed explicit procedures to assess pre-employment/work maturity skills.

Assessment of pre-employment/work maturity skills can help determine appropriate work experience positions.

Examples of Assessing Pre-Employment/Work Maturity Skills

Example #1—Sponsoring Workshops on Work Maturity. One program held a large orientation at a civic center where applicants circulated around different booths to attend workshops addressing pre-employment and work maturity issues. The orientation lasted an entire day, and participants had opportunities to meet with SYETP staff to explore their interests and needs. Several workshops offered participants the opportunity to hone their skills, including interview workshops conducted by personnel directors from local businesses. These workshops were intended to assess participants' skills while introducing them to employers. SYETP coordinators hoped that the assessments results from these workshops would inform the service planning process. **Lubbock/Garza PIC, Lubbock, Texas**

Example #2—Providing Guidance about Assessing Work Maturity. This SDA required its service providers to survey all youth to determine their pre-employment/work maturity skills, and "strongly recommended" that providers use a structured interview that it provided. Examples of survey questions include: "Have you ever worked before?" "Have you ever interviewed for a job?" **Mayor's Office of Chicago, Chicago, Illinois**

Developing Effective Individual Service Strategies

Many SDAs view the ISS as a compliance document.

Many case study SDAs viewed the ISS as a compliance document—one that needed to be completed because it is required. In many cases, its only major function was to document to which service provider a participant had been referred.

But the ISS can help youth set educational and occupational goals—both for the summer and for the longer run—and can help the SDA plan needed services.

In contrast, SYETP legislation encourages SDAs to adopt a more responsive approach to help youth accomplish their educational and employment goals. Although a comprehensive ISS is not always feasible in SYETP, SDAs are encouraged to develop an ISS that can be used year-round and that includes (1) the training plan that links participants' goals with the skills to be acquired, and (2) information on referrals when necessary. Ideally the ISS not only records assessment results but also functions as a strategic planning device for SYETP services, and acts as a "living document" that is continually updated. In sites where the ISS was well-developed and used appropriately, SYETP staff jointly developed the ISS with the clients and considered the ISS as an integral part of the program.

A well developed ISS contains many types of information.

Case study SDAs that had well-developed service planning procedures commonly included the following information in service plans:

- *Basic skills*. Basic skills need to be documented to inform to which services youth will be assigned.
- *Occupational interests and pre-employment work maturity skills*. Documenting these skills can also help inform which participants receive work experience and to which position participants should be assigned.
- *Participants' goals*. Establishing educational and career goals for youth not only gives meaning to SYETP services, but also encourages youth to think about long-term planning. Counselors should help youth identify realistic career goals that are consistent with their interests and aptitudes.
- *Barriers*. The ISS should record barriers that prevent youth from reaching their goals. Such barriers may include basic skills deficiencies and counseling needs. In addition, the ISS should document intervention strategies to overcome these barriers.
- *Services planned*. The ISS should document to which services participants are assigned, based on their goals, assessment results, and barriers to reaching their goals.
- *Supportive service needs*. The ISS should identify supportive services needed and procedures to ensure that those services are received.
- *Sequence of services*. When used as a strategic planning document, the ISS should outline activities not only for the summer but for the entire year.
- *Counseling notes*. The case managers who are responsible for the ISS should update participant's progress on a regular basis. Concerns, issues, and other problems should be noted in the ISS.

Examples of Developing Effective Individual Service Strategies

Example #1—Developing Comprehensive ISS Procedures. This SDA emphasized the significance of the ISS and offered staff training on how to complete it. The training encouraged staff to act as facilitators to help participants define and attain their goals. Several individuals were involved in developing the ISS, including the participant, the service provider, and staff from the SDA. The ISS contained three sections. The SDA staff filled out Part I, which recorded information on academic services, career interests, pre-employment/work maturity skills, goals, referrals made, and supportive service needs. Part II was completed by the service provider and returned to the SDA after the third week of enrollment. It included information on planned program outcomes and services received. Part II was also intended to encourage service providers to think about the next steps and how to prepare youth for the upcoming activities. In Part III, service providers recorded post-program information, including basic skills post test scores and a record of supportive services provided. The ISS was later returned to the SDA. **Mayor's Office of Chicago, Chicago, Illinois**

Example #2—Developing a Formalized ISS Process. In this SDA, the ISS process was highly formalized. After intake and eligibility determination, participants met with a counselor who analyzed test results and other personal information. The youth and the counselor then discussed training and educational opportunities. The participants were later referred to an ISS team that decided on the appropriate service options The ISS team assisted youth in identifying long-term service planning objectives based on skills, abilities, interests, and barriers. Each youth met with the counselors on a regular basis to discuss assessment results and other life challenges, including barriers. Counselors on the ISS team made a concerted effort to document progress throughout the summer. **Upper Rio Grande PIC, El Paso, Texas**

Using Assessment Results to Match Youth to Services

The next challenge facing SYETP systems is to make sure that assessment results are actually used to determine the services that participants need. In case study SDAs, we discovered many instances where assessment results had no impact on the service planning. Many of these SDAs faced logistical challenges in assigning youth to services and relied on circumstantial factors—such as transportation barriers and residential vicinity—to assign youth to services.

In some SDAs, assessment results have no impact on which youth get which services. Instead, logistics are the only consideration.

This guide recommends, however, that SYETP systems make enrollment and service planning decisions based on more than circumstances alone. In fact, the SYETP legislation indicates that SDAs are expected to develop an individual service strategy that highlights participants' strengths and areas for improvement, as well as barriers and the strategies to address barriers. In sites that used assessment results to develop the service plans, the staff worked closely with the youth to develop service plans that were relevant to their interests and skills.

SDA Guidance on Using Assessment Results in Service Planning

Some SYETP programs were successful in using the assessment results in the service plans because of the leadership from the SDA. Many SDAs take responsibility for developing the ISS. In these cases, they obviously have direct control over how assessment results are used. In other SDAs, the responsibility is delegated to providers. In these instances, effective SDAs need to exert strong leadership in specifying the requirements for the ISS. These SDAs provided guidance on ways to structure service planning and required that service providers address identified needs, such as basic skills deficiencies, in the ISS.

Leadership from the SDA can influence whether assessment results are used in service planning.

Examples of SDA Leadership in Service Planning

Example #1—Providing Clear SDA Guidance in a Decentralized System. At this site, assessment was conducted entirely by the service provider, with strong leadership from the SDA. The SDA stipulated that the objective assessment should cover of reading and math skills, career interests, and a pre-employment/work maturity survey, and that youth who scored below the 7th grade level were to be assigned to remediation. **San Bernardino Employment and Training Agency, San Bernardino, California**

Example #2—Emphasizing Occupational Interests. This SDA emphasized participants' occupational interests and work experience as the two main criteria for work experience placement. In addition, youth who returned for services from the previous year would not be placed in the same job so that they would get diverse experience. **SDA 7, Waterloo, Iowa**

Example #3—Using a Combination of Assessment Sources. One SDA relied on a number of assessment sources to assign youth to services, and encouraged its providers to do the same. In deciding which participants would receive work experience—or a mix of work experience and academic enrichment—the SDA used a combination of TABE scores and applicants' interests, transportation needs, and knowledge of the work world. **Manasota PIC, Sarasota, Florida**

Using Assessment Results to Tailor Educational Services

Another way that assessment results can be used in service planning is to tailor the content of participants' educational instruction to the skills in which they are identified as deficient during assessment. This strategy can be used by SDAs that offer self-paced educational instruction—for example through computer-aided instruction—and by SDAs that offer a variety of educational services.

Assessment results can also help tailor the content of educational services.

C. CASE MANAGEMENT

CHALLENGES

Because the youth targeted for SYETP often possess multiple educational and employment barriers, it is important to provide them with support, advocacy, and encouragement during their SYETP services and to link them with services they may need after they leave SYETP. Summer Youth participants who receive responsive case

Responsive case management can help youth make more informed choices, be more successful in the summer, and see links to year-round services.

management can make more informed choices, have greater chances of completing the program successfully, and can better see links between the summer and year-round activities.

SDAs, however, face challenges in providing responsive case management to SYETP youth, including:

- Assigning appropriate staff to serve as case managers.
- Providing support to a high volume of SYETP participants in a short time frame.

Arranging for Appropriate Staff to Serve as Case Managers

SYETP systems face a serious challenge in arranging for staff who are well-qualified and have experience working with disadvantaged youth to serve as SYETP case managers. SDAs need to divide responsibilities appropriately between the SDA and the service provider staff and identify individuals who can play the role of case manager during the summer months.

Dividing Responsibilities Between the SDA and Service Providers

In any case, SDAs should not assume that case management will be provided by its providers. Instead, SDAs that explicitly assign responsibility for providing case management either to the service providers or to SDA staff make it clear that case management is important. In our case studies, we found examples of high-quality case management provided by either the SDA or provider staff. However, case management was particularly responsive when both the SDA and service providers had some responsibility for tracking participants' progress and providing support.

SDAs should not assume that their providers are providing case management services; instead, responsibility for case management should be explicitly assigned.

Approaches to dividing responsibility for case management included:

- *Giving service providers responsibility for handling case management.* Some SDAs believe that providers are best equipped to manage this task because they are "the first line in defense" and can more quickly learn about and handle problems that arise for their participants.
- *Assigning SDA staff to handle case management.* Other SDAs prefer to assign case management

responsibilities to their own staff. This approach works best when staff specialize in serving participants in a specific set of providers or work sites. Specialization facilitates case managers' ability to keep abreast of the activities at their assigned service providers, which helps them better assess participants' progress.

- *Implementing a shared approach.* Still other SDAs share the responsibility for case management between the SDA and service provider staff. This approach builds on the strengths of both organizations. The provider can more easily track progress and learn about problems while the SDA can more easily arrange for resources to address the problems.

Case managers can work one-on-one or in teams.

Another aspect of assigning case management responsibility is whether each case manager works alone or whether several case managers work as a team and share a caseload. The advantage of the one-on-one approach is that case mangers can become more quickly acquainted with participants and thus better assess their progress. The advantage of the team approach is that staff members can exchange insights about participants' progress and share ideas about how to address problems that arise.

Examples of Dividing Responsibility for Case Management

Example #1—Subcontracting Case Management to the Service Provider. This SDA subcontracted case management services directly to the service provider. The case managers consisted of work site supervisors or members of the work crew. These individuals were expected to meet with participants once a week to monitor participants' performance. Because the service provider staff were case managers, they were aware of the immediate needs of the client and made referrals for supportive services available through nearby agencies. **Sonoma County PIC, Santa Rosa, California**

Example #2—Assigning SDA Staff to Conduct Case Management. One SDA assigned its "service representative" staff to serve as case managers. These staff worked in teams that were responsible for particular sets of work sites or projects. These three-person teams consisted of two younger, less experienced staff and a more experienced staff member, who assumed a supervisory role. Because the service representatives were in the field everyday visiting participants, the representatives could keep the SDA abreast of the Summer Youth activities. As a result, the SDA could intervene early when problems arose at the worksite or in the classroom. Essentially, the service representatives functioned as "eyes and ears" for the SDA. **PIC of Lehigh Valley, Allentown, Pennsylvania**

Example #3—Including Multiple Constituents in Case Management. In this SDA, the case management team consisted not only of the SDA case manager, but also included teachers and work supervisors. All team members helped youth identify career goals and collaborated on developing student portfolios that demonstrated the students' progress during the summer. **Seattle/King County PIC, Seattle, Washington**

Assigning Appropriate Staff to Serve as Case Managers

SDAs that provide case management services directly need to assign these responsibilities to appropriate staff. Because adequate case management can mean success or failure in the Summer Youth program, SDAs need case managers with appropriate experience in providing meaningful services to young people, many of whom have pressing personal needs. This can be difficult, however, because of the short-term nature of the program.

One approach is to assign permanent staff—typically staff from the Title II-C program—to act as SYETP case managers. The advantages of this approach are that it ensures that staff have experience working with disadvantaged youth and it enhances the ability to link summer activities to year-round services. However, because the Summer Youth program typically serves more youth than the Title II-C program, the number of Title II-C staff is limited. Thus, relying on these staff exclusively typically results in large caseloads.

Staff from the Title II-C program can be effective case managers because they are experienced in working with disadvantaged youth.

A second approach is to hire temporary staff to fill the SYETP case management positions. Although this approach allows the SDA

to bring on more staff and thus reduces caseloads, the SDA faces the challenges of ensuring that the staff have experience in working with disadvantaged youth and that they are adequately trained. To meet these challenges, case study SDAs often hire teachers as temporary SYETP case managers.

Hiring temporary staff can reduce case loads, but SDAs need to ensure that these staff have experience working with disadvantaged youth.

Another approach to overcoming staff shortages is to use SYETP staff with other responsibilities as case managers. For example, once the preliminary stages of enrollment are complete, the intake and assessment staff can take over the role of case managers. Although this strategy makes additional staff available, its disadvantage is again that it often results in large caseloads.

Using SYETP intake staff as case managers is another strategy.

Ensuring that Participants Receive Responsive Case Management Services

Because SYETP systems serve a large number of youth, case management services are often restricted to "administrative" tasks—such as documenting program attendance so that participants are paid correctly, or checking that service providers are in compliance.

But many Summer Youth participants are in need of guidance and nurturing to successfully complete SYETP services. These young people may also need a variety of supportive services to complete the program. To adequately serve these youth, therefore, SDAs need to ensure that young people receive responsive case management services. This entails establishing clear goals for case management, limiting case loads so that case managers can provide substantive case management, establishing procedures to maintain regular contact with youth, and monitoring youth's progress during the course of the summer.

Many SYETP youth need guidance and supportive services to successfully complete the summer program.

Establishing Clear Objectives for Case Management

It is essential that SDAs establish clear goals for case management to ensure that case managers do more than keep records, distribute checks, or check attendance. SDAs need to develop guidelines for the conduct of case management activities that meet the needs of participants. The types of requirements that case study SDAs develop for this task include guidelines about:

SDAs need to establish clear goals and guidelines for case management.

- *Frequency of client contact.* Some SDAs require staff to contact and/or visit participants at the training or work site frequently.

- *Activities to be accomplished.* Some SDAs require that while on site, the case managers collect information on participants' progress, explore problems and issues that may have arisen, assess supportive service needs, and obtain feedback from the instructor or work-site supervisor about the participants' progress.

Example of Establishing Clear Objectives for Case Management

Example #1—Establishing Guidelines for Responsive Case Management. This SDA established clear guidelines for case management services. Case managers were required to conduct weekly visits with participants. The purposes of these visits were both to provide responsive case management—by assessing students' progress, conferring with instructors and supervisors, and identifying any problems that may require referrals to other services—as well as compliance issues—such as checking timecards and monitoring attendance. Counselors also engaged in crisis intervention when necessary, addressing the wide variety of problems that youth faced, including family matters, relationships, and housing. **New Directions, New Bedford, Massachusetts**

Limiting Case Mangers' Case Loads

When case loads are large, case management tends to be pro forma and unresponsive.

Limiting the size of case managers' case loads provides more opportunities to better serve young people. In case study sites with large case loads, case management services proved to be pro forma and unresponsive. As a result, many participants dropped out of the SYETP program because their needs were neither assessed nor addressed.

Enforcing smaller case loads is beneficial for both the participant and the staff because (1) participants can receive more attention and support from the staff and (2) staff can become more attuned to the needs of the participants during the summer and can better link them to year-round activities.

Restricting case management services to specific types of youth is not recommended.

One approach to limiting case loads that is not recommended, however, is restricting case management to specific types of youth. Some case study SDAs provided case management services only to older youth who were transitioning to work or to a year-round program, and believed that younger participants did not require the same case management services. Other SDAs targeted case

management to youth who were only receiving work experience. This selective approach neglects the needs of certain categories of participants for the sake of others and is not responsive to participants' individual needs.

Example of Limiting Case Loads

Example #1—Providing Directives about Case Load Size. This SDA took a proactive measure to ensure that case management occurred frequently and that these services were meaningful to participants. The SDA enforced the maximum number of cases for each case manager or a team of case managers. This SDA insisted that each case manager's case load should not exceed 50 participants. In fact, the SDA highly encouraged service providers to reduce caseloads to 35 participants to permit the provision of substantial case management services. A service provider for the same SDA doubled its case management staff for SYETP and cut case loads from 50 to 24 or less per case manager. **Seattle/King County PIC, Seattle, Washington**

Maintaining Regular Contact with Participants

Maintaining regular contact with participants helps case managers address problems when they arise rather than when they become crises.

One of the most essential components to a responsive case management system is maintaining regular contact with participants. The staff and the participant need to build a trusting relationship that will allow the case managers to respond to problems. In addition, the case managers need to continually assess whether or not participants have the support necessary to remain enrolled. Further, staying abreast of participants' progress can help case managers address problems as they arise, rather than waiting for them to become crises. These functions of case management are only possible through regular contacts with the participants.

It is not realistic to expect at-risk youth to diagnose their need for help on their own.

SDAs need to develop a system in which case managers contact participants regularly rather than relying on participants to take the initiative in seeking help. One case study SDA adopted the latter "self-help" approach because of its high volume of participants, but this approach left youth to their own defenses because case managers believed that it was not their responsibility to "pry." Requiring case managers to maintain regular contact is particularly important for youth who are at-risk or have multiple barriers because it is unrealistic to assume that these youth can diagnose their own need for help.

Examples of Maintaining Regular Contact With Youth

Example #1—Having "Worksite Liaisons" Contact Participants Weekly. This SDA assigns multiple tasks to its SYETP staff. Once the intake and assessment process are complete, the intake staff play the role of case managers, or "worksite liaisons." The staff visit the individual work experience and special project work sites at least once a week and help link youth to other needed community resources. As part of these visits, the staff also monitor school attendance and participation in special tutoring. Case managers write out relatively detailed notes in a log to document client contacts. **Seattle/King County PIC, Seattle, Washington**

Example #2—Having Vocational Counselors Contact Participants Frequently. In this SDA, case management services are performed by vocational counselors. Counselors are expected to visit participants twice a week, either in the class or at the worksite. Although the instructors and worksite supervisors were not designated case managers, they were also expected to handle behavioral problems. **Balance of Maricopa SDA, Phoenix, Arizona**

Example #3—Using Case Management Contacts to Coordinate Education Services with Work Experience. This SDA assigned case management responsibilities to the work experience contractor, who hired its own case managers. The case managers visited their corresponding worksites at least once a week, primarily to ensure that participants were performing well. The case managers also coordinated educational services with work experience through frequent contacts with the instructors. Typically, case managers conveyed to the teachers any work maturity problems that arose so that these problems could also be addressed in class. **Centralina Job Training Consortium, Charlotte, North Carolina**

IV. PROJECT-BASED LEARNING

INTRODUCTION

What is Project-Based Learning?

Project-based learning is an instructional strategy in which participants plan, implement, complete, and evaluate a valuable, real-life project. By dealing with the many facets of a complex project, learners are offered multiple opportunities to regularly practice, master, and verbalize an array of important and integrated skills in a variety of situations. In this approach, learning, content, and process are totally integrated.

In project-based learning, participants plan, implement, and evaluate a real-life project.

Project-based learning strategy stands in sharp contrast to traditional classroom-based educational methods—which often emphasize academic skills only—and to traditional work experience—which focuses almost exclusively upon employment issues. Indeed, well-conceived, learning-rich projects are permeated with:

In well-conceived projects, participants can learn a wide range of critical skills.

- SCANS skills and competencies.
- Basic skills.
- Academic content and subjects.
- Specific vocational and occupational skills.
- Work-maturity skills.
- Life skills.
- Citizenship and community service skills.

In addition, instructors and supervisors shift away from the traditional role of "telling youth what to do and how to do it." Instead, they call upon learners to take on many of the responsibilities traditionally reserved for the "overseer." Learners are more responsible for their learning than is the case in traditional instructional or work environments. Learners also reflect upon the skills they have learned and how those skills can be applied in other contexts.

In project-based learning, participants are more responsible for their own learning than in traditional instruction.

Advantages of Project-Based Learning

Project-based learning represents an excellent strategy for conveying important knowledge and skills. However, resistance to the

approach should be anticipated, and early problems and glitches are normal. Project-based learning is relatively new to many educators, work supervisors, employment-and-training practitioners, and others who prepare future workers. And like any major new approach, the people involved (be they the learners or the professionals who work with them) may misunderstand and be initially wary or uncomfortable.

Although project-based learning requires a new way of teaching and learning, it offers many advantages.

The advantages of project-based learning, however, can outweigh the disadvantages of implementing a new system. When implemented correctly, project-based learning can both better prepare youth for the workforce and can be a more effective strategy to teach youth basic and SCANS skills.

Better Preparing Youth for the Workforce

Project-based learning exposes youth to a wide range of SCANS skills and competencies—the skills needed in the modern workforce.

The well-documented changes in the industrial mix in the American economy—the shift from manufacturing to knowledge industries—and in the employment relationship—the shift from long-term employment with a single employer to shorter-term employment with several employers—have dramatically affected the skills needed in the workforce.

In its 1991 report, *"What Work Requires of Schools: A SCANS Report for America 2000,"* the Secretary's Commission on Achieving Necessary Skills defined an array of skills and competencies that American workers need in the modern labor force. As described in Chapter I, these SCANS skills and competencies provide a jumping-off point for educators, businesses, and other work-force development institutions to provide training in the transferable skills workers need to succeed in knowledge-based jobs across many occupations and work places.

Through planning and carrying out a project, project-based learning can give youth the opportunity to develop SCANS skills. Not only do youth learn these skills in an authentic environment, but they also "learn how to learn" in a workplace context. Thus, the experience teaches them the skills they need to become productive and flexible workers.

Youth can learn SCANS skills in an authentic environment and "learn how to learn" in a workplace context.

Teaching Skills More Effectively

Project-based learning teaches skills in a functional context so youth understand how to apply new skills in real world situations.

As noted in Chapter I, considerable research has shown that students learn better when material is presented in a "functional" context, so that youth can see the importance of the skills they are learning and how to apply them in their lives. Project-based learning follows several "functional-context" instruction precepts:

- Learners do and demonstrate something that uses what they are learning and is directly related to a real-life situation.
- Parallel to modern labor market demands, academic learning, work skills, and life skills are integrated.
- Participants use their new skills regularly and in many contexts. Over and over again, learners are permitted and encouraged to think critically, analyze information, communicate ideas, make logical arguments, work as part of a team, and acquire other desirable skills.
- Participants have time for "reflection," which helps assure that learners not only use skills but also grasp how to use them correctly and efficiently.

Project-based learning is consistent with standards developed for many educational reform efforts.

Further, the project-based learning approach is consistent with many educational reform efforts. State education departments around the United States have issued guidelines for curriculum change in the public schools. Sometimes these mandates are called "frameworks;" other times, they are called "standards." Often these changes are tied to the "School-To-Work/Career" movement. But in all cases, schools are expected to change in many ways what they teach, how they teach it, and how they organize the education process.

A common theme among these efforts is the integration of academic learning with the realities of the labor market. States' curriculum "frameworks" or "standards" usually require educators to:

- Call upon young people to use many, if not all, of the SCANS skills and competencies.
- Develop active learning activities that regularly cross all six levels of learning: knowledge, comprehension, application, analysis, synthesis, and evaluation.
- Address a variety of learning styles and modes.
- Use an array of proven instructional methods, including functional-context instruction, applied "learning by doing," and cooperative learning.

All of these elements are present in well-developed project-based learning programs.

Challenges to Providing High-Quality Project-Based Learning

To attain these advantages of project-based learning, SDAs and their SYETP providers need to address several challenges:

- Choosing an appropriate project.
- Identifying learning goals and objectives.
- "Pre-planning" an effective project.
- Orienting youth to project-based learning.
- Guiding youth in conducting the project.
- Implementing appropriate assessment mechanisms (including use of reflection, portfolios, journals).

The remainder of this chapter presents strategies that SYETP programs can use to address each of these challenges.

CHOOSING AN APPROPRIATE PROJECT

"How do we recognize a good project when we see it?"

SYETP practitioners may want to develop project-based learning experiences for summer youth, but may initially find themselves at a loss for answers to the questions:

- How do we recognize a "good" project when we see it?
- Who comes up with project ideas?
- What are some examples of projects that might be appropriate for SYETP?
- How can we assess whether an idea for a project is feasible?

To help SYETP staff answer these question, this section presents a definition of a project, identifies strategies that SYETP programs can use to develop ideas for learning-rich projects, provides some examples of categories for learning-rich projects, and suggests steps to determine whether a proposed project is feasible.

What is a Project?

A project is an organized, coordinated set of tasks that provide multiple opportunities to use, master, and reflect about an array of valuable skills in a variety of contexts. To do so, a project must:

A project is an organized, coordinated set of tasks that provide multiple opportunities to use, master, and reflect about an array of valuable skills in a variety of contexts.

- Have a clear end or completion point.
- Result in a tangible product or set of results.
- Be completed within a pre-set time period.
- Involve multiple, sometimes complex, steps to complete.
- Require research, critical thinking, problem-solving, and application of many academic subjects and other skills to implement.

In addition, some projects may require that participants periodically leave the "project center" (be it a classroom, job-site, or other location) to do their work.

Strategies for Generating Ideas for Projects

"How can we generate ideas for projects?"

SYETP programs can use several strategies to generate ideas for projects, including devising projects to address a community need, transforming existing work experience jobs, or transforming a classroom program. In some cases, young people themselves can identify worthy projects within a set of parameters identified by the adults. These strategies are described below.

Developing Projects to Address a Community Need

Developing projects to address a community problem is one strategy.

Learning-rich projects may tackle a community problem. When a problem drives project-development, the result may be a set of projects because there is usually more than one "solution" to any problem. Examples of specific problems and potential projects to address those problems include:

- A number of walls in a community's public places that are prime targets for graffiti. This graffiti problem may be addressed by any number of projects. For example:
  - Participants might conduct simple graffiti removal.
  - Participants might paint over the graffiti.
  - Participants might develop a community "anti-graffiti painting day" in which youth recruit residents to paint over graffiti in an organized, community-wide effort.

  - Participants might design and paint a set of wall-murals. This has the advantage of moving from blank walls that attract graffiti toward walls that do not. (Because many youth who do graffiti consider themselves to be artists, they rarely deface a mural. Indeed, they are often the best candidates to take part in creation of the mural).
  - Participants might initiate a prevention project, such as developing an anti-graffiti marketing campaign in a community.

Many community problems can be addressed through a variety of projects.

- An increase in violent incidents among students at a local high school. This complex issue might be addressed by any number of helpful, learning-rich projects. For example:
  - Participants might develop a video that sws the effects of violence on students and their families.
  - Participants might organize focus groups of students who analyze common reasons for the violence and then generate alternative, non-violent ways that address the root causes.
  - Participants might develop a peer-counseling program that focuses on a concept like, "If you're really angry, call us before you do anything you'll regret later!"

Other community service projects may not address a problem but rather serve to enhance the environment of the community or the lives of its residents. Examples include projects such as:

- Designing and planting a community garden.
- Converting a vacant lot into a softball field.
- Developing a community newsletter.
- Creating an audio-cassette for a self-guided tour for tourists.
- Conducting a historical building survey.

Examples of Developing Projects to Address a Community Need

Example#1—Working to Restore a Natural Environment. One program engaged a group of fifteen young people in restoring a 74-acre tract of undeveloped land owned by the local school district that included a pond, wetlands, and a hardwood forest. The participants were called upon to build: (1) at least 500 feet of handicapped-accessible walkway, (2) an additional 2-mile series of trails through the ecological highlights of the area, (3) an "outdoor classroom" with wooden benches, and (4) a trailhead area with a display case. **Cayuga/Cortland SDA, Auburn, New York**

Example#2—Giving Youth Control over Project Builds Community Pride. At a program where young people built two softball fields in a community with a lack of outdoor recreational space for youth, the participants showed tremendous pride in what they had accomplished over the summer. As the comments below reveal, perhaps the most important lesson participants gained from this project was knowing that they could contribute to their community in valuable ways, that young people can be resources to their communities. "We learned that it's important to take responsibility for doing something positive for your community instead of going out and doing stupid things that give teenagers a bad name." Moreover, participants articulated how something like a softball field can impact the lives of other youth in the community. "When I was a little kid," one participant said, "I had no place to pay ball. So I got into lots of trouble. I broke all the windows on all the cars on a street once, just because I was bored. I don't want my little brother to be like I was. Now maybe he won't be. I'm bringing him down here next week with some of his friends so they can use the field we built!" **New Directions, New Bedford, Massachusetts**

Example #3—Having Youth Present Results to Community. This program engaged youth in a variety of activities revolving around appreciation and restoration of local waterways. For example, participants learned about repairing small boat engines and also landscaped areas along the waterway that had been neglected. In addition, youth repeatedly collected water samples from drainage pipes that flowed into the waterway, tested the samples for contamination, and charted the outcomes. An unanticipated event was that the young people decided that their findings should be given to the Waterways Commission so that the Commission could further investigate pollution in the waterways and take appropriate action. Participants indicated that this decision gave greater meaning to the project because they felt that their work might be used to effect change in their community. **Department of Employment & Training, Providence, Rhode Island**

Transforming Traditional Work-Experience Jobs and Private Sector Internships

Another approach is to transform traditional work-experience jobs to make them "learning rich."

A second strategy is to transform traditional work-experience jobs into learning-rich projects. In such high-quality "work-based learning" situations, programs need to identify a work-driven project with a clear end-product and delivery schedule.

If the work is real, the learning will be real.

If the work is real (and it should be), the learning will be real. However, the driving rule is, "The work must get done." Learners complete a real, tangible task or set of tasks that are of value to the employer. Significant learning should occur, but not at the expense of the work. Thus, a balance must be struck between getting the work done and drawing learning from the work.

These learning-rich projects contrast with many summer jobs in which SYETP participants are assigned tasks that are repetitive and boring, and involve few skills other than perseverance and patience. Having youth spend weeks where their sole function is to operate a photocopying machine, mow grass, or wash floors are just some examples of such jobs.

Many traditional work experience jobs offer few opportunities to learn important skills.

Although an important task might have been tackled, participants in these types of jobs have few opportunities to learn important skills. Little thinking is involved on the participant's part, and the jobs rarely provided participants with a long-term sense of accomplishment. These jobs are not "projects" because there is rarely a clear end-point or lasting result of participants' efforts. SDAs offering such "grunt work" jobs often assume that entry-level workers are incapable of tackling more formidable tasks. However, low expectations lead to low performance; and commensurately, high expectations will lead to high performance.

Learning-rich jobs call upon youth to think, solve problems, plan, make decisions, and take responsibility.

To transform these jobs into projects, SYETP programs need to reevaluate the very nature of many entry-level jobs. Summer planners and supervisors can ask, "How might we turn this job into a project that calls upon the SYETP participant to think, solve problems, plan, make decisions, and take responsibility for much of what had traditionally been handled by a white collar supervisor?"

For example, each summer, many SDAs assign a number of young people to work for the custodians at public schools. Participants often spend their summers doing menial tasks such as removing bubble-

gum and washing desks, washing and waxing floors, or doing rudimentary painting.

In contrast, a "transformed" summer experience might involve a supervisor saying to his/her charges during the first days of their summer job, "I want you to spend four hours today walking around the school building. I want you to think about how it feels to attend classes in this building and how the environment makes you feel. I want you to do an inventory of problems that need to be addressed within the physical plant—work that would make the building a better place to learn in. Come back to me with a list of ideas."

When the youth return with their ideas, the supervisor might then say, "Now I want you to go back and figure out among the problems you identified, what are the most important problems and which could you address this summer? Give me a proposal for what you will do this summer to make our investment in you worthwhile." Then, the young people would plan, implement, and manage the work on the school building that they proposed.

Private sector internships can also be transformed.

Similarly, private-sector internships can be transformed into learning rich environments. Like their public and non-profit employer counterparts, private business employers that hire SYETP participants want the work to get done. Although learning is certainly important, when push-comes-to-shove, delivery of work products must take precedence over the learning.

Some employers may be very interested in having youth tackle a learning-rich project. In these situations, SYETP program can help the employer formulate a learning-rich project, as well as offer follow-up support and coordination throughout the summer. For example, an employer might have previously hired an SYETP participant to handle "grunt-work" photocopying duties. Instead, the employer could ask the young person to conduct a formal "efficiency analysis" of the company's whole photocopying process to determine and document—through his/her personal experiences and conversations with employees—where the photocopying process was wasteful. The youth could generate a report recommending ways that photocopying costs could be reduced.

For some businesses, however, having youth work on a project may be out of the question. These employers may offer a job, period. Even in these cases, it may be possible to have each youth's supervisor

spend some time reflecting upon the skills the youth is using and identifying "best practices" for each skill. In other cases, it may be possible for the SDA to send a counselor or instructor to the job site who will handle these issues in coordination with the employer's supervisor.

Transforming Classroom-Based Activities

Traditional classrooms can be transformed by including learning-rich projects, in which youth work in a "real life" context to produce a clear product.

SYETP programs can also transform classroom activities to include learning-rich projects. Classroom-based project-based learning represent a significant part of the SYETP approach. The project work becomes the vehicle for learning. In classroom project-based learning situations:

- A clear product and delivery date is involved.
- Learners attempt to complete "real-life" or "simulated" projects that use work-based or life-based experiences as the basis for classroom activities (often within the typical constraints of a school setting).
- The end-product is real or authentic, or at least mimics the "real thing." Activities deal with real work situations and use real tools and job materials.
- The learning is paramount and can take precedence. When "push-comes-to-shove," completing the project may have to take second priority to the learning.

In contrast to a work-based learning situation, the final work-product of a classroom-based project does not necessarily have to be completed. There is no real "employer" seeking production efficiency. Certainly one would hope that youth will complete their project. In doing so, they will feel proud, have a sense of accomplishment, and conceivably experience increased self-esteem. However, because project tasks are learning-driven rather than work-completion-driven, the instructor has the flexibility to say, "Hey, I'm sorry we didn't get the work done and that's too bad, so what have we learned from this experience?"

Examples of learning-rich classroom-based projects include:

- A local history project that has participants research an historic building, its architectural design, its inhabitants, and those inhabitants' place in history.
- A voter registration project that calls upon participants to learn about local political issues, present multiple

political arguments from various standpoints, and go door-to-door trying to persuade people to vote.

- A modern art project that has youth learn about artistic painting theory, create paintings for display, and sell their work.

Examples of Transforming Classroom-Based Activities

Example #1—Creating Books for Children. This classroom program targeted hard-to-serve youth between 16 and 21 years old, and recruited youth through the parole office and the school. The classroom instruction in this program was designed to improve the participants' writing skills. As their main project for the 6-week program, each student was called upon to research, write, and potentially publish a picture book for young children. Interviewing and reading to children at a local day care center helped the participants make decisions such selecting a topic, and how the book should be illustrated. Although most of the class functioned at the 2nd or 3rd grade reading level, the students were able to read and write at a level appropriate for books aimed at young children. In contrast to tradition "remedial" classes for students with basic skills deficiencies, the project was non-threatening and provided students an opportunity to gain confidence and motivation. **NE Washington Rural Resources, Colville, Washington**

Example #2—Learning about Computer Technologies. A computer-based technology class provided students with opportunities to learn about new technologies and to apply their knowledge to a particular task. Students worked in groups of two or three and rotated among fourteen different work stations. At each station, students learned scientific and historical facts related to the technology, and followed instructions on how to use the technology. What the students most enjoyed, however, was the opportunity to apply what they had learned to a group project. For example, at the car building station, a group of students was asked to design three different cars—economy, family, and sports. The software program evaluated each design and provided feedback so students could then modify their designs. **Balance of Maricopa SDA, Phoenix, Arizona**

Having Participants Propose Projects

Experienced programs can have the young people propose their own projects.

Another strategy is to have the young people initiate a project. This strategy may involve considerable risk for the institution sponsoring these projects and for its supervisors because they can do minimal advance planning—they will not know what their summer will be like until the youth have decided what the project will be. This strategy is usually followed only when an instructor/supervisor has extensive previous experience overseeing project-based learning and feels confident about his/her ability to react to the unknown. On the other hand, youth-conceived projects carry with them the power of youth ownership, and with ownership usually comes commitment.

Although youth can be empowered to choose their own project, they should be given clear parameters.

Most often, when youth are empowered to choose their project, they are given limited reign. The sponsoring institution or the supervisor establishes the parameters. Youth are then called upon to identify a project that they would like to work on that falls within those parameters.

To choose their own project, youth must:

- Brainstorm potential projects that fit within those parameters.
- Research the logistics of the projects.
- Decide which project is achievable within the available time.
- Propose to the adults what they would like to do.
- Meet with the adults to negotiate approval (or approval with adjustments).

For example, a project supervisor might tell a group of eight young people on the second day of their summer program:

- "Today is Monday. Last Friday we all met. You folks, the project sponsor, your teacher, and I have agreed that you are going to do something you can be proud of for this community. We don't know the specifics yet. You must give us the specifics. It should be really impressive!
- "On Thursday, the eight of you must together bring me a product. I want you to come to me with a 1-page, written proposal for how you would like to spend your summer doing something valuable for our community. Give me your vision of what you'd like to do!

- "The eight of you must collaborate to find a community service project that:
  - All eight of you would like to tackle.
  - You collectively agree can be done during our six weeks together.
- "You must spend today through Wednesday working hard on this issue under my oversight here at the work/classroom site. You can leave the site to do aspects of this task, but you'll have to negotiate your off-site time with me in advance. I'll expect to see products of your off-site time, also to be negotiated.
- "I'll expect to be given in writing or verbally (with all eight of you actively contributing):
  - The name you've given your project, and how you chose that name.
  - Your arguments for why this project is important to you and the community.
  - A clear and detailed description of what your finished product will look like, including products and outcomes.
  - An explanation of why all of you want to work hard on it.
- "You must have reached consensus on this proposal, and I want to know how each of you feels about it."

The example above represents an approach that has been used successfully in many project-based learning situations.

Examples of Potential Projects

Exhibit IV-1 presents additional ideas for projects that, if well designed, can provide participants with skills-rich experiences resulting in tangible, valuable outcomes. Although we have separated project examples by categories, many projects have the potential to cross many categories of learning.

Exhibit IV-1
Examples of Potentially Learning-Rich Projects

Facilities Construction, Maintenance, and Improvement Projects

Convert a vacant lot or under-utilized school yard into a softball field.

Improve the grounds and buildings of a residential facility.

Produce an inventory of maintenance and improvement work that should be done to the physical plant of a school, public facility, or community organization.

Build a safe playground.

Conduct weatherization or insulation projects.

Paint, renovate, or otherwise improve public housing, public schools, or other neighborhood facilities (libraries, child-care centers, gymnasiums, basketball courts, softball fields, etc.).

Build a park that serves as a "learning station."

Tackle a graffiti problem.

Environmental Projects

Create a new nature trail.

Rehabilitate an existing nature trail.

Construct an outdoor environmental "teaching station."

Conduct an environmental reclamation project.

Conduct an erosion-control project in a park or at a beach.

Develop a report analyzing the effect of higher water temperature at a power-plant outflow to determine its effects on fish, aquatic plant-life, and other wildlife.

Construct an outdoor amphitheater.

Conduct a landscaping project at a local park or arboretum.

Plant community gardens and teach residents how to plant.

Convert vacant lots or "ugly" urban land into gardens.

Design and construct a greenhouse to supply plants year-around for community public areas.

Design a new traffic flow plan for a heavily congested intersection, and propose it through regular legal channels to local leaders.

Conduct a long-term water survey, correlating fluctuations in bio-diversity and other environmental influences with chemical analysis, and present findings to the state environmental agency.

Evaluate and compare three sites that are being proposed for a local landfill, and present findings to local leaders.

Exhibit IV-1 (Continued)

Projects Serving the Elderly

Lead a "meals on wheels" project.

Set up ongoing projects involving social visitations to shut-ins or nursing home residents.

Fix elderly residents' homes and grounds.

Construct a PAR exercise course for local senior citizens.

Projects Highlighting or Addressing Local Youth Issues

Organize and operate a community youth sports league.

Produce a youth theater focusing on youth issues.

Produce a video or public service announcement on a subject of interest to youth.

Develop an anti-violence campaign.

Create a system to bring youth from diverse backgrounds together to learn about each other and break stereotypes.

Set up a tutoring system for local children.

Projects focusing on media/communication issues:

Publish a student operated newsletter or newspaper.

Produce a video documentary highlighting work-based learning activities.

Produce articles, photo-documentaries, video-clips, or other media pieces for a local commercial, public, or cable television station.

Develop a yearbook.

Create a visitors' guidebook highlighting local attractions for hotel guests.

Develop a brochure.

Projects Focusing on Community and Civic Responsibility

Develop a plan for efficient and timely school-bus routes that could move students from many neighborhoods across a broad geographic area to one city-wide magnet school.

Produce a video or public service announcement targeted to particular segments of the community or the community at large.

Assist with blood drives or inoculation programs.

Develop a neighborhood fair or festival.

Organize a voter registration drive.

Conduct a project to aid children and families.

Conduct a survey and/or research project regarding community issues, and present results.

Publish, market, and sell a newsletter or newspaper focusing on important local issues.

Exhibit IV-1 (Continued)

Projects Focused Upon Other Important Community Issues:

Organize all aspects of an important ceremony (i.e., a high school prom or GED recipients' graduation ceremony).

Construct furniture that can be donated to local low-income families.

Redesign toys so that they can be used by children with disabilities.

Lead a local HIV/AIDS awareness program.

Design an interactive computer program to teach children about basic dental hygiene.

Design a medical services bus that can deliver basic health-care services to residents in communities that cannot easily travel to hospitals for regular medical care.

Projects Focusing on Art-related Concepts:

Design and paint a public mural.

Design and market a poster that conveys an important social message.

Produce a "quilt" focusing on an important issue.

Create paintings of "life in the area," and display and sell them.

Paint park or bus-stop benches artistically.

Analyze the architecture of local history buildings, and make recommendations regarding preservation to the local historical society.

Paint all or part of a historic structure according to historic preservation standards.

Produce a theater or dance production.

Convert the language of a Shakespeare play into modern "street language," sell tickets, market, and put on the play for an audience.

Write the musical and voice scores of an original song focused on a subject participants choose, and sing it publicly.

Projects Focusing on Entrepreneurship, Creation of Unique Products, and Business Development Concepts:

Operate a custom, silk-screened T-shirt business.

Run a store selling used (but "in") clothing.

Operate a business that sells, maintains, and even periodically replaces small plants for office workers' desks or cubicles.

Make and sell "custom-colored" candy and other munchies (i.e., lime-flavored candy that is colored purple).

Operate a "Rent-A-Teen" odd-job service

Assessing the Feasibility of a Project

The next step is assessing whether the project is feasible.

After potential projects have been identified, the SYETP provider needs to carefully assess its feasibility, in terms of the time and effort required, whether it can be interesting and engaging for youth, and whether it is consistent with relevant laws and regulations.

Estimating the Time and Effort Required

Programs need to develop a "ball-park" estimate of the time a project will take.

The first feasibility issue is whether the project can be completed in the time available. At this stage in the planning process, programs need to develop a "ball-park" estimate—a rough sense of how much time will be needed to tackle the project given the number of participants tackling it. This "educated guess" of time and human resources will provide a foundation and starting point for subsequent planning; the details will be fine-tuned later.

The SYETP provider should estimate how many hours will really be available for participants to spend planning, implementing, and reflecting about their project, following these steps:

- Start with the number of weeks participants will be on-board
- Consider how many days per week and hours per day participants will be able to spend directly on the project. Remember to subtract hours and days that will not be devoted to project work such as orientation days, testing time, field trips, transportation time, time lost due to tardiness or bad weather, close-out ceremonies, and other non-project summer activities.
- If applicable, consider division of time allocation across work-site and classroom: How much time at the work-site will be available for on-task project work? How much time in a classroom will be available for on-task project work?
- Also account for the time the participants need to reflect on their experiences each day.

Regardless of the best planning efforts, unplanned glitches will occur; there will be less time available than planners think.

Even after a thorough analysis, the program will probably overestimate the time that is really available for project work because many unplanned glitches occur, regardless of the best planning efforts. Our advice is to take your estimate of time available and multiply it by 60%; the resulting number will probably be closer to reality.

Assessing Whether the Project is Interesting and Engaging for Youth

The project will not be learning-rich if participants simply do the "grunt work."

Sometimes the value of the product resulting from a youth-run project is immediately evident to the adults involved. However, when planners really think about what it will take to do the project, they realize that most of the work that participants will actually do will be boring, repetitive, and low-skilled. This will not lead to a learning-rich project.

This disheartening scenario usually occurs when an assumption driving the project is that the supervisor, instructor, teacher, or other "authority figure" is the one who will do all the thinking, planning, and problem solving; participants' roles will be limited to the "grunt-work" that remains. If so, it is time to re-think the project.

To avoid this situation, ask the following questions:

- What are the tasks that a "white collar" manager would traditionally have been responsible for (in contrast to those of the "blue collar" underling)? Of these tasks, which ones might young people be able to do? (The planner may need to be imaginative and make a leap of faith at this point.)
- Will this project regularly enable all participants to be actively involved in thinking, planning, problem-solving, implementing, and evaluating? If not, what changes should be made to it?
- Will most of the facets of the project prove interesting to participants? If not, how might it be made more interesting?
- Will the project allow participants to use an array of skills in a variety of contexts? Do the skills address learning goals and objectives? If not, how could the project be "enriched?"

Example of a Project that is Interesting and Engaging for Youth

Example #1—Structuring a Project to Give Participants a Meaningful Role. This project entailed restoring undeveloped land and building outdoor structures to provide access to the natural areas. The youth did the "grunt work" of clearing areas and building the structures, but they were also heavily involved in all aspects of the project. Yet participants did much more than perform the work they were expected to identify and solve problems that arose, and they also took on several responsibilities relating to organizing and evaluating the project work. For example, each daily component had a "youth supervisor" assigned to the task who provided leadership and was responsible for their team's output for the day. **Cayuga/Cortland SDA, Auburn, New York**

Assessing Whether the Project is Consistent with Regulations and Laws

Planners should carefully research regulatory and legal issues that could affect the project.

Project planners should carefully research regulatory and legal issues prior to setting up a project. Some projects that sounded good when initially conceived ultimately fail because nobody looks into issues of law and regulation. The most common sources of regulatory difficulty are:

- Child Labor laws.
- Union collective bargaining agreements and work rules.
- Local building codes.
- School regulations.

Identifying Learning Goals and Objectives in a Project

Participants will not learn important skills and knowledge by chance; projects must be organized to foster learning.

Young people enrolled in SYETP will not learn important skills and knowledge by chance. Rather, effective, concentrated learning will only occur when SYETP programs organize summer activities to foster learning.

SYETP programs, therefore, need to define in advance the learning goals and objectives that will drive the projects. Formulation of goals and objectives helps to "force" learning-rich activities to occur. Clarity of learning goals and objectives among front-line staff directly correlates with instructional and learning quality.

Learning goals are statements of what young people would gain by participating in a particular activity, experience, or program. Goals provide a sense of what each program hopes its participants will do, learn, and achieve as the summer progresses. In employment and training jargon, statements of learning goals are usually called "competencies." SDAs have had some experience defining learning goals or competencies within the pre-employment/work-maturity areas that are such a strong part of JTPA history.

Learning goals are statements of what young people would gain by working on the project—what will participants learn?

Learning objectives are concrete, observable, measurable statements of learning outcomes that flow directly from goals. Achievement of objectives occurs through program activities that directly correlate with those objectives. In JTPA jargon, learning objectives are usually called "competency indicators" or "benchmarks." SDAs have had some experience formulating learning objectives usually within the pre-employment/work-maturity areas.

Learning objectives are concrete, measurable outcomes related to the goals—what will participants be able to do?

During the pre-summer planning and contracting processes, SYETP programs need to ask the following questions:

- What do we really want participants to learn during their SYETP experience? (What are our learning goals?)
- What should participants be able to do and to demonstrate that will clearly exhibit what they have learned?" (What are our learning objectives?)

With clear answers to these question, programs can choose summer projects not only upon their intrinsic community service or work-related value, but also upon their potential to enable participants to fulfill the predetermined learning goals and objectives.

Defining Learning Goals

"Why should we identify learning goals."

Learning goals explicitly state what the participants are expected to learn during the summer. Establishing goals allows the SDA to judge the merits of potential projects. Clear goals also allow instructors and supervisors to know that their tasks will be to teach participants a specific set of skills. Further, youth will know what they should learn and be able to demonstrate their knowledge in the specific project to which they are assigned.

Because well-conceived projects can provide opportunities to learn in a variety of areas, programs can identify goals in both

educational and other arenas:

- Goals related to areas considered as "educational" by DOL:
  - Basic skills.
  - SCANS skills.
  - Other educational fields, such as science or history.
- Goals in other areas:
  - Work maturity skills.
  - Pre-employment skills.
  - Vocational skills.
  - Civic/citizenship skills.
  - Other skills (e.g., life skills).

Exhibit IV-2 presents examples of learning goals in each of these areas that were used by case study SYETP programs.

Core learning goals apply to all projects.

Well in advance of the arrival of participants, SYETP programs need to formulate a *core set of learning goals* and objectives that will drive *all* summer activities. These core skills provide the SDA with parameters for selecting or developing projects. For example, an SDA might set a core goal that participants improve their math skills. Then, any potential summer project under consideration should offer youth multiple opportunities to work heavily with math—such as having young people develop and regularly evaluate work schedules, budgets, blueprints, and other math-driven products as part of their project experiences.

Exhibit IV-2
Examples of SYETP Learning Goals

Examples Of Educational Goals

Basic skills goals.

- Improve participants' reading, writing, and math skills.
- Prevent summer learning loss, particularly in reading, writing, and math.
- Improve participants' reading, writing, spelling, English-speaking, vocabulary, and math.

SCANS Skills Goals.

- Achieve workplace competencies and SCANS skills.
- Identify, select, plan, and allocate resources, use teamwork, and learn basic organizational skills.
- Increase students' knowledge of problem-solving skills.
- Think creatively, work productively, and communicate effectively.
- Use critical thinking, problem-solving, and communication skills.
- Exercise higher-level thinking skills, make good choices and follow through, increase capacity for self-reflection, and identify ways to improve performance.

Examples of Goals in Other Areas

Work-maturity skills goals.

- Provide youth with work-readiness skills—attendance, punctuality, effort, task completion.
- Enhance work-maturity skills.
- Provide meaningful, challenging work experiences that enable youth to fully understand job assignments, the nature of occupations, responsibilities and opportunities.
- Assure participant competence in exhibiting good interpersonal relationships, completing tasks effectively, being consistently punctual, maintaining regular attendance, demonstrating positive attitudes and behaviors.

Pre-employment skills goals.

- Assure participant competence in completing job applications and writing resumes.
- Youth will learn and practice effective job interviewing behaviors.
- Increase knowledge of labor markets and careers.
- Help youths develop skills needed to make decisions about education and career goals.
- Raise participants' awareness of occupations within the health care industry.

Vocational skills goals.

- Convey carpentry skills.
- Convey fundamentals of artistic concepts.
- Enhance participants' specific and sometimes transferable occupational skills through their work experience (e.g., answering phones, photocopying, using computers).

Exhibit IV-2 (Continued)

Participants will learn video-technology skills.

Learn specific occupational skills related to plant materials and maintenance procedures.

Learn furniture manufacturing skills, and pertinent safety rules and regulations.

Citizenship, Civic, and Community Participation Goals.

Learn components and activities intrinsic to community service.

Be instilled with a sense of community service responsibility and good citizenship.

Develop attitudes and skills to cope, value, and thrive within service work.

Develop an awareness and appreciation of community.

Other life skills goals (not already covered above).

Promote money-management life skills.

Convey life coping skills.

Acquire study skills.

Other Skills or Qualities.

Develop skills for positive relationships.

Increase awareness of personal strengths, weaknesses, values, goals, risk behaviors, health issues and behaviors.

Enhance self-esteem, highlight cultural identity, and develop life skills.

Help youth motivate themselves.

Help participants become aware of their own personal learning styles.

Provide participants with leadership skills.

But each project carries with it a *unique set of project-specific learning opportunities* that go beyond the SDA's core goals. These additional opportunities should not be ignored. Rather, they should be capitalized upon and turned into overt learning goals. For example, an arts and marketing-oriented project may offer youth not only a chance to use nearly the whole array of SCANS skills but also to learn about painting, drawing, computer-based graphics, sales techniques, and other concepts. In contrast, a project focusing on developing a wooden walkway through a wetlands area would not necessarily provide opportunities to learn art-specific skills, but would offer opportunities to learn carpentry, environmental science, and horticulture skills.

"Project-specific goals" arise from the additional learning opportunities presented by each project.

Defining Learning Objectives

Each learning goal should be accompanied by several objectives. Learning objectives provide measurable, observable evidence of what participants have learned. Learning objectives are particularly important for project-based learning because they force supervisors and instructors to focus on the learning-driven purpose and content of the project rather than only on the process or final product of the project.

Each learning goal should be accompanied by several objectives.

Unlike goals, objectives go far beyond providing a general sense of what a program hopes participants will learn by the time they have finished their summer experience. Rather, objectives state clearly and exactly:

- The knowledge young people should have attained.
- How they should be able to apply this knowledge.
- The skills, knowledge, and concepts they should be able to demonstrate.

A simple way to understand learning objectives is to imagine that a professional evaluator will arrive at the end of the summer and say to participants, "*Prove* to me that you learned something this summer! *Show* me evidence of what you have done and learned, *demonstrate* your skills, and explain the details to me in depth." Learning objectives provide the foundation for youth to be able to demonstrate their achievements.

Learning objectives provide the foundation for youth to demonstrate their achievements.

For example, an SDA may establish the objective, "Among participants who complete the program, 85% who are basic skills deficient will achieve a half-grade level gain in reading or math; and 95% of those who are functioning at or above grade level will at least

maintain grade level." Pre- and post-test scores would then represent the evidence the hypothetical evaluator requested. In addition, participants would explain what it was they learned that contributed to any improvements.

The features of a good objective include:

- *Setting a time* during which behaviors/actions/learning will be achieved. For example:
  - "Upon completion of the summer experience,..."
  - "By the end of the third week,..."
  - "After finishing the fourth exercise,..."
- *Stating an outcome* for a particular set of learners—what all or a number of participants will be able to do. For example:
  - "All participants will be able to... "
  - "65% of learners will achieve..."
  - "Youth who are assigned to the project's marketing team will master..."
  - "Participants who actively participate in the training seminar will demonstrate..."
- *Using "action verbs"* that are observable and measurable, and describe what constitutes successful performance by the participant. For example:
  - "*Describe* how the worker uses five key safety features in a fashion congruent with the operator's manual for a circular saw."
  - "*Demonstrate* the steps necessary to research a famous political figure on the Internet—from turning on the computer on through obtaining a printed document on that figure."
  - "*Identify* problems associated with common playground equipment, *generate* potential solutions, *present* findings to an audience of community leaders, and *analyze* where else these skills might be useful in the work world."
  - *Formulating* learning objectives is not easy. The SYETP Evaluation found that formulating appropriate learning objectives was a significant challenge for many SDAs and programs.

One pitfall is to devise vague objectives that are actually goals.

One common pitfall is devising vague learning "objectives" that are actually "goals," such as stating that youth will "learn," "know, "understand," and "become familiar with" material. These objectives, however, are not measurable. For example, it is not sufficient to say, "Participants will know how to handle an interview." Both "know" and "handle" are vague enough so that different people could define them in different ways. These verbs may suffice in "goals" but not in "objectives." These verbs do not force the supervisor or instructor to be accountable for what participants learn.

Another pitfall is to state an objective as knowledge rather than a skill.

Another common problem is to state an objective as knowledge rather than as a skill. For example, the objective, "After completing the program, 85% of participants will be able to define two ways to organize a resume," requires participants to demonstrate their *knowledge* of resumes. In contrast, the objective, "After completing the program, 85% of the participants will be able to complete two types of resumes," requires that participants actually perform a *skill*.

Assessing What Skills Can be Learned in a Project

The next step is identifying how the project can teach participants the targeted skills.

After identifying learning objectives, project designers need to assess whether and how the project can teach participants the targeted skills. To do so, project planners should think through the lists of the skills they are trying to convey through the project, and determine whether participants will have ample opportunities to use each skill multiple times and in a variety of contexts.

For example, a math teacher and several natural science teachers may team up to develop project that entails designing a walkway through the state park. The math teacher may have recognized that the design of a "wandering" walkway will use lots of geometry. The teachers of natural science may recognize that their students can use the design of the walkway and its accompanying area as a "lab" that brings their subjects to life. Thus, as students design the walkway, they will be called upon to use the targeted math and science skills. In such a case, the project meets the skills outcomes necessary to meet the particular classes' needs.

It is possible, however, that there are several skills or content areas that are under-represented by the activities inherent in a project. Perhaps those skills and content areas will not be used at all. Perhaps they will be used only once. Perhaps they are not applied in a variety of contexts.

When some skills are "underrepresented," the project may need to be augmented.

These under-represented skills and content areas should be identified. Project planners should then ask whether they may have missed opportunities to teach skills or academic knowledge and if so, assess whether they could alter their project somewhat so that the use of one or more of these under-represented concepts might occur multiple times in a variety of contexts.

Below we present two examples of projects that incorporate a wide variety of skills.

Examples of Projects Teaching Multiple Skills

Example #1—Developing SCANS Skills. A program that asked youth to plan and develop videos documenting Summer Beginnings programs provided participants with opportunities to develop a wide variety of skills and competencies. The program instruction and activities were designed to support acquisition of several SCANS skills. For example, participants improved basic writing skills by completing an assignment in which they critiqued several documentaries. By generating ideas and then actually filming the videos, participants learned to think creatively, problem-solve (e.g. deciding what to film and then what to edit), work as a team, and acquire, evaluate, and communicate information (e.g. learning about program activities and conveying that in the videos).
City of Los Angeles SDA, Los Angeles, California

Example #2—Using Community Service Work to Build a Variety Skills. Young people had an opportunity to develop a wide array of skills in a program where they built two softball fields at a school in their community. To build the softball fields, participants learned construction and landscaping skills such as laying out a square field, mixing concrete, and planting and caring for shrubs. In carrying out tasks, participants regularly used academic skills such as reading, general mathematics, and geometry. The young people also spent considerable time developing teamwork, problem-solving, and presentation skills. The following quote by one participant illustrates how academic skills, teamwork, and peer learning were all utilized to accomplish a task: "I understand fractions a lot better now because we had to use them all the time. There was so much measuring to do. And we had to lay out the field. None of us had any idea how you figure out a square that big, and then one of the other kids who is in drafting at school gave us an idea and it worked."
New Directions, New Bedford, Massachusetts

PRE-PLANNING A PROJECT

Although youth will develop a detailed plan on their own, it is essential to develop the basic design before the youth arrive.

The next challenge is to pre-plan the project before the program begins. Although the youth will eventually develop a detailed project plan of their own, as we describe in the subsequent section, it is essential that instructors or supervisors think out the basics of project design before the youth arrive. Doing this "pre-plan" will enable instructors/supervisors to:

- Anticipate how participants might carry out the project.
- Envision the basic project and its expected outcomes as they think it should occur.
- Anticipate the resources—materials, supplies, money, people, and skills —that might be needed as the project progresses and determine whether some of these resource needs must be addressed prior to the youths' arrival.
- Identify possible problems that can be addressed in advance.
- Think out possible processes through which the youth can eventually define, develop, and complete their project while youth also learn a great deal.

Breaking the Project into Component Parts

Identifying the component parts helps planners organize the project.

The first step is to analyze the most important component parts of the project. Doing so will provide a clearer picture of what will really have to be done to design, organize, implement, and complete the project. Planners can arrange the components into a logical order and determine whether some components can be handled simultaneously while others must be done sequentially.

For example, if the project is to design a wooden walkway that hikers could use as they traversed the state park's wetlands area, the component parts that participants will do might be:

1. Walk through the wetland and gain a basic orientation to the project.
2. Develop a planning schedule.
3. Identify consultants or others who have special skills needed to tackle the project (i.e., skills beyond those available among participants).
4. Plot exactly where the walkway will run.
5. Investigate walkway designs and construction techniques that have been used in other similar places.
6. Design the walkway to fit location needs and budget restraints.
7. Analyze the materials, tools, equipment needed and the associated costs.
8. Think out safety issues, regulations, and procedures that should be addressed.
9. Identify transportation logistics and make recommendations (i.e., how do we get people and materials to the site)?
10. Develop a construction schedule.

Breaking a project into its component parts brings life to the project, and gives planners a better sense of what really has to get done.

Defining Quality and Outcome Standards

Developing quality standards for each component helps ensure the entire project will succeed.

The next pre-planning step is to define what the outcomes of each component must be for it to be considered "completed satisfactorily." This step is critical. If, for example, the third of a five-step process step is done poorly, odds are that the fourth and fifth steps will not turn out well either.

Therefore, planners need to look at each of the components and ask themselves, "What must participants have done or delivered for their work to be considered of high quality and meet acceptable standards of completion?" Although the participants may select the approach to completing the component, these standards represent criteria that must be fulfilled regardless of how it is done.

For example, referring again to the project of designing a wooden walkway that hikers could use to traverse a wetlands area in a state park, the outcome standards for Component 4—Plot where the walkway will run—might include guidelines that the walkway should follow a route that:

- Has a clear starting and ending point (named in advance by park authorities).
- Runs in a generally straight direction from start-point to end-point.
- Although the walkway's general direction will be straight, it may need to weave somewhat en route so that it:
  - Does not require removal of significant numbers of trees or bushes.
  - Minimizes other damage to the area during and after construction.
  - Enables visitors to view close-up the most interesting trees, bushes, and wildlife inhabiting the area.

For a project that involved painting the exterior of an historic building, some of the quality standards might be:

- The painting must be done neatly and professionally.
- Child labor laws and industry safety regulations must be observed.
- The paint must be a high-quality latex, exterior paint in colors that match the building's original color scheme.

Example of Defining Quality and Outcome Standards

Example #1—Establishing Guidelines for Designing Bus Routes. One program had participants work in teams to develop simulated bus routes for the school district. Two "competing" teams were given a list of about 200 students and had to design bus routes to transport the students to elementary, middle, and high schools. In designing the routes, the teams were given a set of guidelines. For example, no student could be on a bus for more than 75 minutes, and only 5 buses were available. After three weeks the teams had developed draft bus routes. The next step was for each team to "field-test" the bus routes with a driver to assess whether the driver could follow the route (each team prepared instructions for the drivers) and to verify the actual time it would take to complete each route. Modifications to the bus routes could then be made. In addition, participants gained an understanding that they must be accountable for their decisions by engaging in role-playing exercises, such as handling telephone calls from "irate" parents. **City of Los Angeles SDA, Los Angeles, California**

Assessing the Resources Needed

By assessing the resources needed for each component, planners can ensure resources are available when needed.

The next question planners should ask themselves is, "What resources will it take to get high-quality work done on time?" Planners should analyze what will likely be needed in the following areas:

- What *tools and equipment* will be needed?
- What *materials and supplies* are called for?
- Will *money* be needed?
- What are the project's *"people needs"*? What expertise is needed that project staff and participants lack? How can that expertise be found?
- Are *other resources* required?

It is especially important that this phase of project planning be conducted by planners before participants take on the project. Doing so enables those who oversee the project to bring together the crucial resources in advance. For example:

- If a project requires materials that must be ordered in advance, and if the program sponsor's purchasing system requires a 90-day notice to obtain anything, a project could be dead at the starting line if advance-work on the purchasing issue was not identified before-hand.

- It is common for a project to require a set of skills that are no present among job supervisors, teachers, participants, or othe project personnel. Therefore, "consultants" or other "project specialists" may be needed. These human resource needs are best identified in advance. Then planners can choose to:
  - Take responsibility for identifying and bringing in such people before the project starts.
  - Leave it to participants to identify, solicit, recruit, and involve them (as another part of participants' tasks within the project).

Reassessing the Project's Feasibility

After developing the pre-plan, planners should double-check that the project is feasible.

With the reality of the project made clearer through identification of its component parts and quality criteria, planners can reassess whether the project as originally envisioned is achievable given available time, people, and resources.

Often the original plan may appear too ambitious once the full set of tasks is identified. If this is the case, planners may reject the original idea and select another project. Before doing so, however, they should consider the following options:

- Bringing in other resources to make the whole project possible.
- Assigning some components of the project to participants and assigning other components to other people.
- Tackling several of the project components, but not all of them, and designing the work so that it can be completed by others.

Often planners can continue with their original idea, but modify it to be feasible within the SYETP context.

Coordinating Work-Site and Classroom Activities

When work and classroom learning are separate activities, it is essential that they be coordinated.

Some SYETP programs choose to divide each youth's day or week between "work" and "classroom" activities. When this is the organizing framework for the summer experience, it is critical that the two activities be coordinated. Although logistical problems may separate work and learning, youth can still experience the integration of work and learning.

But coordinating work-site and classroom activities to foster such integration requires careful pre-planning. Strategies to coordinate work/class integration include:

- Having work-site supervisors and classroom instructors get to know each other, work together, and pre-plan summer activities together prior to the arrival of the young people.
- Developing formal communication vehicles and schedules through which work-site supervisors and classroom instructors will regularly talk, plan, and merge their mutual agendas throughout the summer.
- Encouraging work-site supervisors to tell classroom instructors about what groups of young people and individual youth are doing on the work-site, and then ask, "How can you bring these issues into your classroom?"
- Encouraging classroom instructors to tell work-site supervisors about what groups of young people and individual youth are doing in the classroom, and then ask, "How can you help me have youth bring their work-site issues into my classroom?"
- Having classroom instructors spend considerable time at their students' work-sites.
- Having work-site supervisors spend considerable time in their workers' classrooms.
- Having youth conduct projects in which both the instructor and the work-site supervisor are always present and work as a team.

Some project activities can be carried out in the classroom.

It is important to realize that well-conceived projects often involve opportunities for learning to take place both at a work-site and in the classroom. For example, consider the example of a project to design the wooden walkway for hikers. Of the ten components, eight might have their activities handled both at the work-site and in class.

Activities such as developing a planning schedule or thinking out the safety procedures, for example, could be done either in a classroom or at the work-site.

Examples of Coordinating Work-Site and Classroom Activities

Example #1—Integrating Class and Work Activities. A program in which young people worked as aides in child care centers made extensive efforts to coordinate classroom and work-based learning. The content of the curriculum included learning about child development (physical, social, cognitive, and emotional), developing skills related to working with children, and then applying that knowledge in work at actual child care centers. For example, in class participants would learn about listening skills such as establishing eye contact to get a child's attention, as well as strategies to re-direct behavior in positive ways, such as encouraging a child to throw a ball outside rather than hitting another student with a toy. The classroom instructor helped facilitate the high degree of coordination by visiting the work sites daily to get ideas for classroom instruction from work site supervisors and to advise work site staff on how to reinforce skills learned in the classroom. **Office of Employment and Training, Jersey City, New Jersey**

Example #2—Integrating Class and Work Activities. In this program, the classroom instructor and worksite supervisor emphasized that coordination between the two settings was a critical factor contributing to the program's success. The program engaged 12 young people in restoring a shelter house, foot bridges, and walkways located in a forest that had been severely damaged from a tornado that struck in 1990. The content of instruction in the classroom included basic academic skills and employability skills that were integrated into the restoration work, such as geometry, interpersonal skills and critical thinking. Each evening, the instructor and supervisor shared information about program progress in order to shape instruction and team groupings at the worksite and in the classroom. The classroom instructor indicated that she would like participants "to think of the classroom as a continuation of the work and the worksite as a continuation of the learning." **Hoosier Falls PIC, Jefferson, Indiana**

ORIENTING YOUTH TO PROJECT-BASED LEARNING

When youth arrive at their classrooms or worksites, programs need to "sell" participants on the particular project and on project-based learning processes in general. Programs need to address not only the issue of why this project is worthwhile, but also why participation in "project-based learning" (with all its commensurate demands) is worthwhile and exciting.

Most youth will expect a traditional summer experience in which they are told what to do and how to do it. When first introduced to the idea of project-based learning, many participants may initially experience fear, distrust, and even anger. Common statements made by participants in the past include: "What do you mean I'm going to have to figure out this stuff myself? I just want you to tell me what to do!" "No way am I going to be able to do that!" and "If we have to do this, what are they paying you for anyway?"

"What do you mean I'm going to have to figure out this stuff myself? I just want you to tell me what to do!"

To address this challenge, SYETP programs can provide an orientation session and introduce youth to project-based learning through "mini projects" before launching the larger project.

Conducting an Orientation Session

To help youth better understand the project-based learning process and address their concerns, one strategy is to present an orientation session that provides:

Orientation sessions describe the project and the project-based learning concepts.

- A thorough description of the proposed project as envisioned by its creators, including:
  - The goals of the project.
  - The outcomes expected from the project and associated parameters.
  - An explanation of why the proposed project is important.
- An overview of what they will be learning, including:
  - A description of the learning goals and objectives driving the project.
  - Information about the SCANS skills and other skills that will be used on the project.
- An overview of project-based learning concepts, including:

- A description of how project-based learning strategies work.
- The ways that their supervisor/instructor will function as a mentor/coach.
- A description of how project-based learning differs from traditional jobs or classrooms.
- An introduction to project assessment methods, including reflections, portfolios, and journals.
- Advanced warning about post-project presentations (if applicable).

As part of this orientation, participants should be encouraged to share their reactions and expectations.

Having Youth Conduct Preliminary "Mini" Projects

Mini-projects provide a transition between traditional learning and project-based learning.

The second strategy is to have youth conduct smaller-scale projects before tackling the larger project. Young people will not usually flow smoothly into project development. They may have had little experience working in teams and minimal grasp of teamwork concepts. They may find the magnitude and complexity of their summer project daunting. They may want and need considerable structure up front. These mini projects, therefore, can be viewed as a transition from more traditional learning approaches to the project-based learning approach.

In these transitional mini projects, it is helpful for the supervisor/instructor to:

- Start out in a traditional, controlling role. Early on, youth will need adults to provide structure. They will need to be told what to do and, at times, told how. However, the supervisor/instructor must always keep in mind that this control is intended to be temporary, as described in the next section, and should seek ways to turn over that control and responsibility to the young people.
- Provide participants with some relatively easy, structured tasks. Simple brainstorming activities done in subgroups that focus on some small aspect of the project are helpful, achievable, and show participants that they are capable of operating in a project-based mode.

- Have participants begin identifying "teamwork ground-rules" governing how they will work with and treat their team-mates, and penalties for those who break ground-rules.
- Have subgroups evaluate their team work, their individual participation, and their collective skills.
- Have individual participants identify their personal skills and talents.
- Assure that each of these preliminary tasks are accompanied by elementary reflection activities, especially about best practices for teamwork.

Example of Having Youth Conduct a Preliminary Project

Example #1—Engaging Youth in Mini Projects. In this program, a group of 8 young people were to produce a video documentary of other Summer Beginnings programs in their SDA. However, prior to working on the final video, the instructor separated the participants into two smaller groups and asked them to produce "mini documentaries." Each group was allowed to determine what their mini video should focus on, how they should film it, and then how they wanted to edit the video. One group chose to focus on a vendor who sold tacos near the school, while the other group chose to create a video that advocated expanding bus service within the school campus. These mini videos enabled the youth to practice the skills required to produce a full-scale documentary, such as logistical planning, research, writing, filming, and editing. **City of Los Angeles SDA, Los Angeles, California**

Guiding Youth in Conducting Projects

Giving Youth Control Over the Planning and Implementation of the Project

Having Youth Plan the Project

If youth are to own their project, they must do the majority of the planning.

Once participants are oriented to the project-based learning concept and seem to grasp the teamwork concepts, they should start to focus their energies on their summer project. Although the supervisor/instructor will have pre-planned the project, participants will conduct a similar planning process to develop their vision of what the project is and how it should be planned and implemented. Indeed, if they are to own and take control of the project, the participants must do the majority of planning, implementation, evaluation, and problem-solving functions for their project.

If what the supervisor/instructor designed and envisioned during the pre-planning process turns out to be different from what the participants design and envision, there is not the assumption that the supervisor/instructor automatically wins. Indeed, if participants generate plans or ideas that have merit yet differ from those generated by the supervisor/instructor, the participant' concepts should generally "win out." If participants generate plans or ideas that have some merit, but have inherent problems and pitfalls, it is the role of the supervisor/instructor to raise these issues, and turn control back to participants to address those problems and pitfalls.

Instructors can help ensure that the participants' plan is congruent with the pre-plan by providing tight parameters.

The supervisor/instructor can increase the likelihood that the participants' plan is relatively congruent with the pre-plan by providing youth with clear project outcomes and tight parameters. For example, suppose that the supervisor/instructor's pre-plan envisioned a wooden walkway through a wetlands area upon which two hikers could comfortably stroll side-by-side If the supervisor simply told youth to "plan a way by which hikers could pass through the wetlands" (a vague outcome with few parameters), youth might generate ideas such as a road, an aerial tramway, or even a railroad. In contrast, if the instructor told youth to "plan a boardwalk through the wetlands that will be approximately 6-feet wide and constructed of non-polluting wood," the young peoples' plan will be closer to the pre-plan.

Participants' planning process typically occurs through activities such as:

- "Scoping out" the project-site (if appropriate) to get a feel for where much of the work will take place.
- Discussing the project vision as presented to them, and adjusting it (within acceptable limits) to make it their own.
- Analyzing the expected project outcomes and parameters, and deciding whether to add additional outcomes or parameters of their own choosing.
- Getting a clearer handle on the scope of work by breaking the project down into its major tasks and components.

Youth should spend time reflecting about what they did and learned through these processes.

Having Youth Develop an Initial Work-Plan

Participanst should prepare a formal, written plan.

With the project's major tasks and components identified, participants will need to think out the processes through which the project will be completed by the end of the summer. They should develop a formal, written plan of action that:

- Defines project outcomes and parameters as previously agreed upon.
- Breaks the project into major operational tasks as previously analyzed.
- Lists the many subtasks necessary to complete each major task.
- Delineates an estimated work schedule defining when each task needs to be completed if the entire project is to be finished on time.
- Analyzes resources needed to complete each task.
- Analyzes skills needed, and how those skills will be brought into and used by the project.
- Identifies regulations, safety rules, or laws that must be observed.
- Identifies other issues pertinent to the project at hand.

Having Youth Develop an Initial Staffing and Leadership Plan

Participants should decide how the tasks will be staffed and who will lead the project.

With decisions made regarding "what needs to be done, how, and when," youth should begin determining who will do the work. Although staffing and roles may change as the project progresses, an array of decisions needs to be made regarding initial staffing for early project tasks. Among possible organizing questions to be addressed are:

- How will participants be chosen to staff each task? Options include:
  - The supervisor/instructor chooses.
  - The participants volunteer.
  - The participants draw lots.
  - The participants already possessing needed skills are assigned.

  - The participants who lack needed skills but need opportunities to use and learn those skills are assigned.

- Which tasks should be done by:
  - An individual participant?
  - A subgroup or small team of participants?
  - All participants together?
  - The supervisor/instructor?
  - Some other adult or organization?
- Who will lead and how will they be chosen? Options include:
  - The instructor/supervisor chooses.
  - The participants choose.
  - The participants who have already shown themselves to be "natural leaders" are assigned or volunteer.
  - The participants who have not demonstrated leadership (but need practice to learn leadership skills) are assigned or volunteer.

Leadership is rotated over time.

Having Youth Review Their Plans

Before implementing the plan, participants should carefully review it.

At this point, participants should be close to the point where they can begin implementing their plan. But, of course, "the best laid plans..." Therefore, prior to implementation stage, time should be set aside for young people to:

- Evaluate their plans.
- Play "devil's advocate."
- Enhance their plans with new ideas.
- Make adjustments as necessary.
- Congratulate themselves for their planning work—and celebrate.

Mentoring/Coaching Youth as They Conduct the Project

Traditional instruction often follows the "jug and mug" philosophy.

In the "old" labor market, decisions and processes were dictated from the top down. Control was in the hands of the executives and managers who told workers what to do, when to do it, and how to do it. Instructional, supervisory, and learning processes often mimicked this structure via the "jug and mug" theory. That is:

- The young people were viewed as the "mugs"—empty vessels waiting for someone to fill them with knowledge.
- The instructors/supervisors were viewed as the "jugs"—the all-knowing experts who "pour" their knowledge into the empty "mugs" of the unknowing youth.

In traditional work experience, supervisors did most of the thinking; participants did the "grunt work."

For years, practices derived from this view also dictated how SYETP projects were carried out. In many cases, the overriding goal of summer projects was only to complete a project. Learning was not a formal priority. In these scenarios, the supervisor or instructor usually:

- Controlled and was totally responsible for project identification, planning, delivery, completion, and evaluation.
- Did most of the thinking.
- Structured most aspects of the project work.
- Told participants what to do, how, and when in nearly every situation.
- Called upon participants to do little thinking.
- Conveyed some valuable skills, but missed many opportunities to have participants learn others.
- Left participants to do a significant amount of low-skilled, low-learning "grunt work."

Traditional methods do have some place in project-based learning, but the should be used sparingly.

This is not to say that traditional teaching and supervisory methods have no role in project-based learning. Indeed, there are always situations in which up-front teaching and training on a specific skill or content area is crucial.

- Some skills can only be done one way. Specific instruction is absolutely necessary prior to skill usage.

- Some knowledge cannot and should not be learned through trial and error. It must be taught first.
- Time constraints may preclude implementing some project-based learning concepts. It takes considerable time for issues to be addressed or problems to be solved without (or with minimal) prior input. Sometimes it is necessary for a supervisor/instructor to accelerate progress by providing an answer or quickly "fixing" a situation.

Most of the time, instructors and supervisors should mimic the demands of the modern work place: youth should do lots of thinking and be expected to meet high standards.

Traditional teaching and supervisory practices, however, are not the norm in project-based learning, and should be used sparingly. In their place, instructors/mentors are called upon to mimic many of the demands of the modern economy. As is the case among high-performance work places with flattened organizational charts, more control and responsibility shifts to the workers/learners—that is, the young people. Hand-in-hand with increased youth control and responsibility is the demand that youth perform complex, creative thinking, and problem-solving tasks that had been traditionally relegated to the teacher or the work-site supervisor. Youth must do lots of thinking and high expectations are the norm.

Youth should be given considerable leeway and responsibility.

The young people are called upon to work toward the outcomes and parameters defined in advance by the instructor/supervisor, but are given considerable leeway and responsibility for:

- Doing many of the tasks that, in the past, had been the responsibility of the instructor/supervisor.
- Taking control over and significant responsibility for the majority of project planning, implementation, and evaluation.
- Using creativity, problem-solving, and complex thinking skills.
- Structuring and scheduling most aspects of the project work.
- Figuring out what to do, how to do it, and when to do it.
- Drawing upon their supervisor/instructor as a resource to help figure out what to do, how, and when in the occasional situation when an issue is beyond their capacity.
- Performing an array of tasks associated with a high performance work-place.

Inherent in this approach is the risk that young people will make mistakes. But people learn through error and struggle.

Inherent in this philosophy is the risk that young people will make mistakes, not operate efficiently, and experience periods of non-productive chaos and confusion. In project-based learning, these apparently "negative" situations are actually considered positive. People learn through error and struggle. Tough situations can represent valuable "teachable moments" that can and should be capitalized upon.

Young people must understand what they control and what the adults control.

Young people must understand what they control versus what the adults control. There must be no misrepresentation on this issue. If an adult tells young people that they will be in control of a facet of a project, it must be true. As a general rule, if the young people make a decision that is not what the adult would have chosen, the adult should let the young people carry out that decision. However, the adult can attempt to educate the youth or have them reconsider their decision by asking pertinent questions about that decision.

For work-based projects, supervisors need to balance the need to get the work done and the need to give participants the opportunity to learn.

As discussed earlier, however, for SYETP work-based projects, the employer has specific requirements for the work to be performed. For summer projects to be viable, project sponsors, instructors, and supervisors must control some aspects of the project. In others, youth should take control. The adults who ultimately are responsible for a summer project, therefore, should regularly ask questions such as:

- Who will really own which aspects of the project?
- Who will really control what happens during each of its various facets?
- Do I have to make this choice, or could the young people make this choice?
- Do I have to tell participants what to do and how to do it, or should they figure it out themselves?
- Should I step in and solve a problem, or should I let the young people struggle to find the solution themselves?
- Should I stop a youth-chosen "mistake" from happening, or let the youth "go down the wrong road" for the sake of the obvious learning experience that will result?
- How will my control versus youth control play out over the summer to enable youth to take the maximum control possible while still providing the maximum chances that the project will get completed?

The answers to these questions will vary, project-by-project. However, supervisors/instructors should keep in mind that with control comes ownership. The more choices adults make, the more work will be required to get youths to buy-in. The more control youth are given, the more ownership—and hence commitment—they will have to the project.

The more control youth are given, the more ownership and commitment they will have to the project.

Examples of Guiding Youth in Conducting Projects

Example #1—Having Youth Plan and Implement Their Project. In this program, 10 young people were given total responsibility for planning, preparing, and executing a Multi-Cultural Festival from start to finish in eight weeks. These young people had complete ownership over the project. Their responsibilities included (1) negotiating with people to solicit food, materials, entertainment and space at a reduced rate or free; (2) preparing budgets and maintaining a log of donations; (3) producing publicity for the event; (4) constructing booths for the festival and (5) evaluating their performance.

The two project leaders of this program were younger and were able to develop a good rapport with participants. While they assisted youth in developing skills required for the project, the staff retrained from explicitly telling the young people what to do or how to do it. One staff person indicated that abiding by this philosophy meant that she would remain silent even when she could see the young people may be heading towards "failure" on a certain aspect of the project. Project staff wanted youth to make their own decisions and learn from their mistakes. Participants indicated that initially they were surprised when adults in local businesses took them seriously and treated them with respect, but by the end of the project they had a sense that they could really get things done in their community. Students indicated that they appreciated the opportunity to think by themselves and solve their own problems. "That is how we really learn," said one youth. **Department of Employment & Training, Providence, Rhode Island**

Example #2—Having Youth Plan a Project for Their Community. This program commissioned a group of 12 young people to design and paint a mural on an outside wall of a local hospital. Instructors outlined the project and then turned it over to the young people. The group had complete ownership of the mural. They selected the theme—a jungle motif—developed a timeline, drew the mural, selected the colors, and divided the work among members in the group. Participants indicated that

several hospital personnel complimented them as the work on the mural progressed. In a focus group, participants emphasized that they enjoyed being recognized for their work. After the mural was completed there was a community dedication, covered by a local television channel, where youth were publicly recognized for their work. **Department of Employment & Training,**

Example #3. Providence, Rhode Island—Giving Youth Control over the Project. This program gave participants broad latitude to determine how the project was carried out. Participants were separated into two groups that designed simulated bus routes to transport over 200 students to elementary, middle, and high schools. Each group established ground rules for decision-making. For example, both groups decided that instead of designating one person as the group leader they would come to consensus on issues. The instructor commented that "[Participants] have really blossomed .... They ask questions but perform with little supervision; they are really on task." **City of Los Angeles SDA, Los Angeles, California**

Implementing Appropriate Assessment Procedures

The final challenge is to assess whether participants have achieved their learning objectives. The strategies described below all involve the participants in the process of assessing what they have learned.

Building in Opportunities for Reflection

The process of reflection asks young people to assess their own progress.

"Reflection" is an essential component to high-quality project-based learning. Essentially, young people are asked to assess their own progress by thinking through the skills that they have used during the project and how those skills can be used in other contexts.

Self assessment can improve learning significantly.

This "self assessment" process can improve learning significantly. By reflection, young people become conscious of what they are learning, leading to several benefits.

- Young people in SYETP can gain an understanding of a wider variety of skills. Although most young people recognize that "carpentry" is a skill, few recognize that many of the SCANS skills and competencies are viable, marketable skills. Through reflection, they can be made aware of the SCANS and other skills and have opportunities to use and verbalize them.

- Young people can become more aware of the skills they are using. Just because a person uses a skill, does not mean that the person is aware that he or she is using it. When focused on a complex task or activity, youth tend to pay attention to the work more than to the skills being used. Through reflection, therefore, youth can better understand what they have learned.
- By asking "What behaviors/actions contribute to effective use of this skill, and which hinder performance?" young people can learn how to use the skills correctly. Because a skill is not one thing but a collection of behaviors and actions, young people need to spend time "picking each skill apart" and identifying those behaviors and actions that constitute a well-executed skill.
- By giving youth opportunities to consider where each skill might also be used—in their lives, at school, or on jobs—it increases their ability to transfer the skills and to improves the durability of the skill

Several reflection questions are especially important for SYETP projects.

Reflection questions that are especially important from the standpoint of SYETP are:

- What is being learned? (These questions lead to skill labeling.)
  - What skills are individuals and groups of young people using to carry out each project task?
  - What academic subject matter applies to this project?
  - What other learning content are individuals and groups addressing?
- How can we assure continuous quality improvement? (These questions foster ongoing project evaluation.)
  - How is the project progressing and in what ways?
  - What is working and what is not?
  - What problems are we facing, and why?
  - What should we keep doing?
  - What should we change? How? Why?

- What is the "right way" to do what we are doing? (These questions help youth assess "best practices.")
  - For each skill we identified, what have we learned about how to use it correctly and efficiently?
  - What are the general practices for each skill that might be considered "industry standards" (e.g., the behaviors or actions that businesses expect their own employees to demonstrate)?
- In what situations beyond this project might each skill also be used? (These questions foster skill transferability and durability.)
  - Where else in our lives might we use what we are learning and doing here?
  - In what occupations might these skills and knowledge areas be particularly important?

In community service or civic action projects, it may also be appropriate to have participants reflect about additional concepts such as:

- What is the role of citizens in serving their community?
- What benefits can be accrued through service and civic action?
- How does it feel to provide this service?

Reflection can occur through many mechanisms.

Reflection can occur through many mechanisms. Generally, youth are more interested and engaged in the reflection process when a variety of reflection methods are used. Examples of reflection activities that might be used include:

- Full group discussions where all participants focus on the same topic matter simultaneously.
- Subgroup discussions where smaller teams all focus on the same topic matter simultaneously and then report out their conclusions to the full group.
- Subgroup discussions where smaller teams focus on different topics and report out their conclusions to the full group.
- Brainstorming sessions regarding best practices for various skills.
- Writing of group or personal reflection reports.

- Reflection "games" (e.g., altering common board-games such as "Sorry" or "Trivial Pursuit" so that students must address reflection issues in order to advance along the board).
- Individual meetings and discussions with the supervisor/instructor or other involved adults.

Scheduling Time for Reflection

Participants should reflect while the learning experience is still fresh.

A key to successful reflection is having youth reflect while the learning experience is still fresh. If participants are working on a project Monday through Friday, for example, and the supervisor waits until Friday to have participants reflect back on their week, it is too late because the details of youths' experiences on Monday through Thursday will have become "foggy."

One strategy is to schedule reflection time before and after the project work each day.

Programs can use two approaches to scheduling reflection time. First, projects can schedule formal time each day *before and after the project work*. For example, a summer work project that involves young people from 9:00 a.m. through 4:00 p.m. can set aside two sessions daily for reflection. When participants arrive in the morning, they can spend one-half an hour discussing the work ahead of them for that day, drawing in reflections from what happened the previous day. They can talk about problems to be addressed, try to solve those problems, assign work to various individuals, and choose an "academic or skills theme" to be considered during the day's work. At the end of the day, participants can meet again to review their work. They can discuss what was done, how it got done, what skills were used, best practices in using those skills, and how the skills can be applied to their academic work.

Another strategy is to capitalize on "teachable moments" throughout the day.

Another approach—which can be used instead or in conjunction with regularly scheduled time—is to have youth reflect and plan activities on a "spur of the moment." For example, the job supervisor, teacher, or other "overseer" can monitor what participants are doing and look for "teachable moments." This person must be constantly aware of situations that crop up through which participants might learn something important. When such ad hoc learning situations present themselves, the "overseer" provides a "learning interruption" by stopping what is happening, calling attention to the learning situation, and drawing out the learning that has occurred through facilitation. By watching for these "teachable moments," which usually occur often,

supervisors/instructors can ensure that reflection and planning occur all the time and represent a significant activity within the project.

Linking Reflection to Evaluation

Reflection can be linked to assessment by identifying "best practices."

Reflection can be explicitly linked to assessment and evaluation of youth through the process of identifying "best practices" associated with a particular skill. To ensure that this link is effective, reflection should include the following steps:

- The best practice should be debated and agreed upon by youth and adults.
- The agreed upon practice should be written down.
- It should then be formally posted for regular reference.
- Once posted, the youth should view it as the law.
- From then on, the instructor should hold them to it (or the youth can police themselves).

This procedure ensures that youth will regularly use and demonstrate best practices, thereby learning skills correctly.

The formal lists of best practices become observable behaviors and actions that can be used to evaluate each participant's competence within each skill area. For example, if participants and adults decide that a best practice within the teamwork skill area is, "There should be no put-downs of team members or their ideas," that concept should be posted and turned into a ground-rule. Participants should regularly ask, "How are we doing on this?" When a rule is broken, the offender should be called upon for his or her behavior. As part of an assessment of whether participants function well as a team, the instructor/supervisor and the participants themselves can use adherence to this best practice as a yardstick.

Example of Building in Opportunities for Reflection

Example #1—Teaching Youth How to Reflect on the Skills Used. At an environmental restoration program, the work-site supervisor used "down-time" or break time as an opportunity for reflection on the skills being used to accomplish a task. This encouraged young people to consider how classroom learning could transfer into a work environment. For example, young people discussed how they employed geometry concepts and teamwork skills to restore a damaged footbridge. The program referred to these conversations as "shop-talk." **Hoosier Falls PIC, Jefferson, Indiana**

Having Youth Write in Journals

Journal writing should be an integral part of project-based learning.

A closely related way for youth to assess their own progress is by having them write in journals. Journal writing is such an important tool that SYETP programs should make it an integral part of project-based learning.

Journal writing serves many important functions.

A journal usually involves a notebook—preferably a 3-ring binder that allows additions and removal of material. Participants write in their journals on a regular basis—preferably daily. This journal-writing can serve several purposes:

- Journal writing can be a way to improve student' writing skills. In this case, journal writing can be viewed as an exercise in learning how to "write correctly." In essence, journals become part of an "English class," and can be reviewed and critiqued periodically for grammar, punctuation, and clarity.
- Journal writing can also be a vehicle to encourage "creative writing" or writing for the sake of expressing thoughts. In these cases, the importance of grammar, punctuation, and other "writing correctness" may be minimized in a first draft—the content of the writing is viewed as more important. However, correct grammar should be expected in subsequent drafts.
- Journals can be a vehicle for recording participants' thinking as they tackle their part of the project. Participants may be given writing assignments that pertain to the project—such as thinking out a problem, generating ideas, or drafting a plan. In these cases, the associated journal entries represent parts of a participant's "developmental portfolio."

- Journals can also foster reflection about skills attainment. Participants can be asked to write about the reflection questions discussed above, such as what skills they have learned, best practices in using those skills, and how those skills can be used in their lives.
- Journal writing can be used to foster other learning goals, such as development of citizenship skills. For example, participants conducting a community service project can be asked to write about what their responsibility might be to their community, to see if participants change their attitudes over time, as their involvement in the project progresses.
- Journals can be reviewed by teachers or counselors to identify problems or social service needs. For example, youth can be asked to write about their lives in general—home life, school life, problems, successes, and other issues of joy or pain—and their needs for support during the project.

As shown by these examples, journal writing can be an important tool in the learning process as well as the process of assessing the extent to which youth have obtained the skills defined by the summer program's learning goals and objectives.

Examples of Having Youth Write in Journals

Example #1—Using Journals to Document Progress. An arts program emphasized a variety of artistic disciplines, including video arts, ceramics, printmaking, photography, and furniture painting. The program documented students' progress by having each participant, referred to as an "apprentice artist," maintain a journal to record field notes from visits to museums and notes from their reading and research, as well as a sketchbook to develop and refine their ideas. At least twice during the eight-week summer program participants also wrote artistic critiques of their work in their journals. Apprentice artists also used their journals to record information that allowed them to calculate a market price for their work, using formulas that accounted for time, materials, and quality. **Mayor's Office of Chicago, Chicago, Illinois**

Example#2—Linking Journals to Evaluation. In a program where young people performed wilderness restoration work, participants spent a significant amount of time reflecting and writing in journals. Each morning, young people wrote in journals and read a short vignette from a curriculum on

wilderness/environmental work. Journal entries were usually made three times a day: (1) in the morning prior to starting class, (2) later that morning in reaction to subjects raised in class, and (3) at the end of the day when work was completed. In addition to writing about events and issues of the day, participants might consider broader issues such as: "How is the program going for me? What is going well? What problems am I having? What might I do to address those problems?" Because they were reviewed by staff, the journals served as an evaluation tool and provide a signal when counseling might be necessary. Both staff and participants indicated that because of the high level of trust, participants were honest and straightforward in their journal entries. **Cayuga/Cortland SDA, Auburn, New York**

Having Participants Maintain Portfolios

A portfolio is a collection of "evidence" of the participant's work and learning during the summer.

Another assessment strategy is to have participants maintain portfolios. A portfolio is a collection of "evidence" of a person's work and learning over time. The portfolio typically takes the form of a file folder, an expanding file, a three-ring notebook, or even a box. Regardless of "container," a portfolio contains works-in-progress and finished products produced by the participant. It also documents the participant's use and attainment of demonstrated competence in particular skills.

Using portfolios as a performance-based assessment device is strongly recommended for SYETP projects.

Many schools and programs are now using "portfolios" as a means of documenting what a student learned and did through involvement in a project, and it is strongly recommended that SYETP programs use portfolios as a "performance-based" assessment device, particularly for project-based learning.

SYETP programs need to address the following problems in implementing portfolios:

- How will portfolios be presented and explained to participants?
- What kinds of "evidence" should participants put into their portfolios as the project evolves?
- Where will portfolios be located (especially when multiple sites are involved)?
- Who will oversee and coordinate portfolio development (especially when multiple teachers, work-site supervisors, and sites are involved)?

- How and by whom will portfolios be reviewed, critiqued, discussed, monitored, and acted upon?

Examples of Having Youth Maintaining Portfolios

Example #1—Having Participants Choose the Content of Their Portfolios. In a program that had youth build softball fields at a local school, each participant maintained a portfolio that documented their goals and achievements. The portfolios provided evidence of the skills used and attained by participants, containing items produced individually as well as through a group effort. Typical "evidence" found in the portfolios included writing samples, a personal journal with daily entries, original poems and song lyrics, photographs of the participant working on the project, and technical drawings such as blueprints and diagrams. While instructors advised participants as to what might go into their portfolios, the young people were the primary decision-makers regarding portfolio content. **New Directions, New Bedford, Massachusetts**

Example #2—Maintaining Portfolios for a Video Project. In this program young people produced videos of other summer youth programs in their service delivery area. Each participant maintained a portfolio to document the tasks they performed for the production of the video. One participant's portfolio contained the following: a written critique of other documentaries, the logistics schedule she had developed for shooting the film, and notes from editing a "mini video" that described the footage, and a copy of the documentary video. **City of Los Angeles SDA, Los Angeles, California**

"THUMBNAIL SKETCH" OF HIGH-QUALITY PROJECT-BASED PROGRAM

To illustrate the concepts of project-based learning discussed in this chapter, we present the following "thumbnail sketch" of a high-quality project that was funded by New Directions, New Bedford, Massachusetts.

Background

This work-based learning program engaged 20 youth in working to improve the grounds around an inner-city junior high school, including creating 2 softball fields. The program operated for 6 weeks, 30 hours each week, and targeted economically-disadvantaged in-school youth between the ages of 14 and 17. The 20 participants were divided into 2 teams of 10. Youth were paid $4.25 per hour for their

In this project, participants created two softball fields for an inner-city junior high school.

participation in work and classroom activities. The worksite included two long-abandoned athletic fields that had become vacant lots with overgrown grass interspersed with spare tires and other garbage. By the end of the summer the youth had created two very impressive softball fields and had restored the areas surrounding the school building.

The program was one of two education programs operated directly by the SDA. It represented a small-scale, experimental pilot project that was based on a generic service learning program model developed by Public/Private Ventures.

Content

The SDA established criteria for funding community service projects.

The SDA solicited proposals for community service projects and selected this project—the creation of 2 softball fields at a junior high school—because the project met the following criteria:

- Provided team-based service/work opportunities for youth to make visible, tangible and appreciated contributions to their community.
- Connected service and learning in the minds of youth through a variety of experiential learning opportunities.
- Developed in youth the employability, personal, and academic skills necessary to succeed at work and in continued education/training.
- Encouraged youth to assume increasing responsibility for their own learning.
- Integrated summer service/work experiences with subsequent school year plans and activities.

The broad array of skills needed to conduct this project provided young people with many opportunities to learn.

The broad array of skills needed to design and implement this restoration project provided young people with many opportunities to learn. The program was designed to help participants attain skills across the following areas: (1) career development, (2) personal development, (3) service and community participation, and (4) personal academics. Through the process of building the softball fields, participants learned several construction and landscaping skills. They used a variety of hand tools and construction techniques, such as laying out a square field, elementary surveying, designing benches, and mixing and pouring concrete. In carrying out various tasks, participants regularly used academic skills such as reading, writing,

and mathematics, and they also developed teamwork, problem-solving, and presentation skills.

Instructional Methods

Work and learning were tightly integrated in this program.

Work and learning were tightly integrated in this program. Each group had a team leader who stayed with the students all day, serving as instructor for classroom activities and as the coach/supervisor at the worksite. Each morning, young people participated in a facilitated group discussion focusing on key skills they would need on the project that day or for many days, on social and health issues such as violence and HIV, and on other topics affecting them. During these sessions participants thought critically, wrote, discussed, and sometimes argued. Only on rare occasions would an instructor lecture to the participants. One group discussion focused on young people's responsibilities to their community and the rewards and challenges involved in community service. The two instructors were adept at leading the discussion and ensuring that everyone spoke. Participants would then write summaries of their thoughts in journals.

Young people took the lead on figuring out what it would take to accomplish the day's work.

After the group discussion each morning, the instructors/supervisors presented goals for the day, and the young people were asked to take the lead on figuring out what it would take to accomplish the day's work. In smaller teams, participants would tackle various phases of the softball field project. For example, one team might mix and pour concrete to create solid bases for park benches, while other groups might measure and level the field. As these teams spread out across the worksite, instructors would float from team to team to check progress, help youth solve problems, and to assure that the work was completed on schedule.

Active learning was the crux of this program.

Active learning was the crux of this program. Participants truly learned by doing. As the examples above illustrate, young people worked in teams, engaged in peer-to-peer teaching, engaged in group discussions, and spent time on their own writing in journals. The project was not limited to the "gruntwork" of constructing and landscaping the athletic fields. With the facilitation and coaching of their two instructors/supervisors, participants determined what needed to be done to bring about a major change to the school's exterior environment. On a daily basis, participants took the lead in organizing their work day and evaluating tasks that had been completed and those yet to be done.

Although the SCANS framework was not a formal driving force behind the program, the young people used and demonstrated an extraordinary array of academic, SCANS, and other skills as they carried out the job. Each day participants were called upon to apply what they had learned in "class" to their work on the softball field and building grounds. For example, geometry concepts reviewed in class were used to measure and survey the fields. Participants also gave presentations of their work, including flipcharts with diagrams for the park benches and blueprints of the softball fields.

Young people used and demonstrated an extraordinary array of academic, SCANS, and other skills as they carried out the job.

The two instructors/supervisors provided guidance and coaching, but encouraged participants to work as a team to solve problems. In a focus group, young people reported that they learned to use brainstorming as a good practice in team problem-solving. For example, at one point a team of young people was stymied about how they would level and support a park bench while the concrete base was poured and cured. The instructor was called over but encouraged the youth to brainstorm. After much discussion, one participant made a suggestion based on something he had seen on a carpentry show on television. Another participant described the solution as "brilliant." As this example illustrates, the staff's high expectations of youth were a critical component of the program.

The instructor provided guidance but encouraged participants to work as a team to solve problems.

The following quote by one participant illustrates how academic skills, teamwork, and peer learning were all utilized to accomplish a task: "I understand fractions a lot better now because we had to use them all the time. There was so much measuring to do. And we had to lay out the field. None of us had any idea how you figure out a square that big, and then one of the other kids who is in drafting at school gave us an idea and it worked."

"I understand fractions a lot better now because we had to use them all the time."

Opportunities for reflection and assessment of progress were incorporated into the program at regular intervals. At the end of each day, participants reflected on what they had learned as they accomplished various tasks. Sometimes they marveled at each other's ingenuity and creativity in solving problems. Each participant also maintained a portfolio documenting his or her goals and achievements. These portfolios provided evidence of the skills used and attained by participants, such as writing samples, journal entries, photographs and technical drawings.

Opportunities for reflection and assessment of progress were incorporated into the program.

Youth Response to the Program

The youth were very enthusiastic about the program. Participants spoke highly of the program staff. "They grew up in neighborhoods like ours. They really understand where we're coming from, and they teach us really well." Participants were clearly pleased to have a voice in decision-making and to be treated with respect by staff. As one participant indicated, "[staff] were there to help us, and we were all equals. We had power and we got to make a lot of decisions instead of always being told what to do." Youth indicated that staff had high expectations of them, but were also very patient. "They always took the time to make sure that we understood things," said one participant.

"We had power and we got to make a lot of decisions instead of always being told what to do."

Youth were excited about the skills they gained, and showed enthusiasm for working as a team and learning from one another. "I know how to use lots of tools now," said one participant. "I want to start doing some projects of my own at home. [I also learned that] it's okay for a girl to do carpentry, and that I can do it better than some of the guys!" Participants also appreciated having an opportunity to learn from one another. "It was easier learning from each other," one participant indicated. "Sometimes you don't want to get told something by an adult. You just don't want to hear it. But when one of your friends tells you, it's okay. I learned a lot from the other kids."

"It was easier learning from each other."

Perhaps most significantly, these young people learned that they could be resources to their communities. As one participant stated, "We learned that it's important to take responsibility for doing something positive in your community instead of going out and doing stupid things that give teenagers a bad name." Another participant added, "lots of us would like to do good things for our communities if someone would give us a chance." Moreover, participants articulated how an athletic field can have a significant impact on a community. "When I was a little kid," one participant said, "I had no place to play ball. So I got into lots of trouble. ... I don't want my little brother to be like I was. Now maybe he won't be. I'm bringing him down here next week with some of his friends so they can use the field we built!" These comments reveal that the project enhanced the youth's sense of ownership and pride in their community.

"We learned that it's important to take responsibility for doing something positive in your community instead of going out and doing stupid thinks that give teenagers a bad name."

V. CLASSROOM TRAINING

CHALLENGES TO PROVIDING HIGH-QUALITY CLASSROOM TRAINING

The large majority of SYETP educational programs teach participants in a classroom setting. As discussed in Chapter I, classroom training does not have to follow a "business as usual" teaching approach that fails to engage students in learning or prepare them for success in the future. The principles of high-quality training can be implemented in classroom-based as well as work-based educational activities.

Classroom training does not need to be "business as usual;" the principles of high-quality training can be implemented in classroom-based as well as project-based educational activities.

The challenges that classroom training programs face fall into two broad categories

- Providing high-quality instructional content, including teaching participants a broad range of skills, setting appropriate objectives, contextualizing the academic content so that youth see the relevance of the content to their lives, and documenting youths' progress in acquiring those skills.
- Providing high-quality instruction, including encouraging teachers to be coaches or mentors, encouraging active learning, and providing participants with sufficient opportunities to learn.

SYETP classroom training programs typically fall into one of the following two categories:

SYETP classroom programs typically fall into one of two types: those that teach academics directly and those that teach academics using a real-world focus.

1. **Classroom Training that Teaches Academics Directly.** Programs categorized here deliver education directly, with the *curricula organized around the academic skills* to be taught. Traditional drill-and-practice approaches to instruction are common examples of programs of this type. But certainly others are less traditional, in that they make heavy use of materials drawn from everyday life (e.g., newspapers might be the reading material chosen for use) and use a variety of teaching methods (e.g., group discussions, computer-aided instruction, peer-to-peer learning, etc.). Their commonality, however, is that their sole objective, practically speaking, is to teach basic skills or other SCANS skills and competencies.

2. **Classroom Training that Teaches Academics Using a Real-World Focus.** In contrast, the programs in this second category organize their educational curricula around the teaching of pre-employment and work maturity (PE/WM) skills instruction, life skills instruction, or vocational skills instruction, with academic skills content embedded in these materials. Of course, consistent with DOL's guidelines on what constitutes "education" in SYETP, instruction in PE/WM skills, life skills, or vocational skills in and of itself does not constitute an "educational activity." But these programs deliver basic skills remediation or training in SCANS skills and competencies via materials related to these topics. Additionally, the programs we have classified here have as their objective simultaneously teaching academics and providing instruction in PE/WM skills, life skills, or vocational skills.

Because these two types of programs face similar challenges and use similar strategies to address those challenges, we include both types of programs in this chapter. Below, therefore, we present examples of both types of classroom training programs that illustrate the principles in the model of high-quality training.

Providing High-Quality Instructional Content

Broadening the Program Focus

The first step that programs take in developing high-quality educational services is identifying what students should learn over the course of the summer.

SYETP programs often focus only on traditional basic skills, to the exclusion of thinking skills and personal abilities.

SYETP programs often focus the content of their programs on teaching students basic skills. Three additional goals established by many programs are school retention, helping students attain school credit, and enhancing students' citizenship skills. These emphases often result in educational programs that pay attention to traditional academic areas—such as English and mathematics—while providing little attention to students' development of "thinking" skills that may enable them to apply academic subject knowledge to their lives to meet with success in the real world. Similarly little attention is typically given to students' personal qualities or abilities to work with others. Often, however, students' personal and social growth can enhance their academic growth; students with greater self-esteem may, for example, see a brighter future for themselves and

work harder in traditional academic subjects to make their future vision a reality.

In essence, by focusing solely on traditional academic basic skills, programs often fail to engage students, make the classroom training experience personally valuable for them, or help them develop a desire to continue learning.

Broadening the focus to include SCANS skills and competencies may be more engaging and teaches participants skills needed in the workplace.

One strategy that may both help programs engage students in the learning process and teach them skills that are needed in their lives is to broaden the focus of the content beyond academic skills. DOL has encouraged SYETP systems to do this by emphasizing basic skills needed in the workplace. These are often based on the SCANS foundation skills and competencies, including:

- SCANS foundation skills.
  - Basic skills—reading, writing, arithmetic, and mathematics.
  - Thinking skills—decision making, problem solving, reasoning, learning how to learn.
  - Personal qualities—responsibility, self-esteem, sociability.
- SCANS competencies.
  - Interpersonal—work as part of a team, negotiate to make decisions, work with cultural diversity.
  - Resources—identifying, organizing, planning, and allocating resources.
  - Information—accessing and evaluating data, organizing and maintaining files, interpreting and communicating ideas, computer literacy.
  - Systems—understanding social, organizational, and technological systems.
  - Technology—selecting equipment and tools, applying appropriate technology to a given task.

Teaching SCANS skills can help participants become better equipped to think about problems, interact with others, and apply their knowledge to complete complex tasks.

The goal of broadening the focus of the SYETP educational services to include SCANS skills is to help students become better equipped at the end of the summer to think about problems, interact with others, and apply their knowledge to completing a range of basic and more complex tasks—all things that students will need to be successful in the world of work.

The value of teaching a broader set of skills is illustrated by a case example. The school counselor of one participant reported that, in the year prior to the summer youth program, the student received 2 Fs, 1 D and no As. In the year following the summer youth program, the participant received 3 As, 3 Bs and a C. When asked how he had been able to make this turnaround, the student reported that he felt that much of the change was due to lessons he learned during the program concerning self-control and conflict resolution. The student still felt he had difficulty with reading and writing, but was more confident in these areas after the summer program. His counselor noted improved relations with teachers as a result of the students' summer of "growing up."

Programs can incorporate these broader sets of skills in traditional classrooms as well as in programs that teach skills in a life skills context. Examples of how both of these types of programs incorporated a broad range of skills into their content are presented below.

Both traditional classroom programs and programs that each skills in a real-world context can include SCANS skills.

Examples of Broadening the Focus of Educational Services

Example #1—Teaching Decision-Making Skills in a Life-Skills Context. The context for the academic skills being practiced in one program was having young people reflect on their personal qualities and think seriously about their goals for the future. The course started off by having youth envision their future and, in particular, think about how they define success. Next, youth were asked to self-assess their interests and personality type, as a means of increasing their self-awareness, and then were asked to consider the intrinsic and extrinsic rewards offered by different types of occupations. Gathering and assessing information were next presented as important steps in making a career decision. Finally, youth were asked to think about what actions needed to be taken to realize their aspirations, including setting intermediate goals and solving problems as they arise, keeping a positive attitude and remaining focused, and gaining the necessary training and experience. The workbook materials were thoughtfully presented and were designed not merely to foster career awareness but to improve participants' understanding of the process of decision-making and problem solving. As the instructor explained, "You won't necessarily chose your life's career in this class. But you will learn a process that you can use again and again." **City of Los Angeles SDA, Los Angeles, California**

Example #2—Teaching Thinking and Problem-Solving Skills in a Traditional Context. The instructor encouraged thinking and problem solving by having students reason through their own situations or questions rather than giving them the answers. She would give the students some points to think about then left it up to them to figure out the next steps, where they went wrong, or how to get the needed information. Students were challenged to solve their own problems, think creatively, and provide supportive evidence for their opinions. Two hand-written posters were on the walls. One stated, "your opinion is always right as long as you support your stance," and the other stated, "think before you speak." Both were foundations of this program. Students indicated that the instructor did not give them answers but made them think about things. One participant reported: "Most school books tell you things, but in this program, books make you want to come to your own conclusions." **Eastern Kentucky SDA, Hazard, Kentucky**

Example #3—Teaching Interpersonal Skills in a Traditional Context. This SDA developed a curriculum for its providers to use. The goal of the curriculum, called "Living in an Ethnically Diverse America," was to increase knowledge, sensitivity, and cooperation among those from diverse ethnic backgrounds so that participants would be better equipped to be productive in a diverse workplace. This course had students participate in group discussions and group exercises about (a) the concept of race and ethnicity, (b) discrimination, prejudice and stereotypes, (c) socially responsible behavior, and (d) interracial cooperation. **City of Houston Job Training Partnership, Houston, Texas**

Setting Program Goals

Identifying Actionable Objectives

The next step is to identify program objectives in each skill area that clarify what students are to learn during the summer program. Learning objectives should state what skills participants are expected to learn; what they will be able to do after completing the program.

Learning objectives should be specific and clear. Without such objectives toward which to work, instructors and participants may waste valuable time.

Some case study programs set very general objectives that were not clear to either the instructors or students. For example, the objective of "improving students' basic skills" is too vaguely defined to act on. Without specific and clear objectives toward which to work, instructors and students may waste valuable time trying to identify objectives. When objectives are clear, instructional organization is easier for teachers, and students understand why they are learning the material presented and why it is relevant to their lives.

Examples of Identifying Actionable Objectives

Example #1—Communicating Clear Objectives to Students. This program's curriculum identified the objectives and skills to be learned in each activity. For example, a module that used newspapers as class material identified several reading and math objectives, including distinguishing between fact and opinion, identifying the main idea in a news feature, and reading vertical bar graphs. In an observed classroom, the teacher communicated the standards and expectations for students to perform well. When she started an activity, she told the students what the objective was and then followed up after the activity was finished to help the students reflect on what they learned that day. Central Area **Partnership Consortium, Greenville, Michigan**

Example #2—Using State-Defined Competencies as Objectives. A teacher in another program used the measurable competencies in the state proficiency exam as learning objectives. In the observed math class, each student was aware of the competency objectives on which he or she was working. In addition, each participant set his or her own objectives, related to grades, personal growth, and extra-curricular activities. **Baltimore City SDA, Baltimore, Maryland**

Example #3—Establishing Competencies Specific to the Program. This program set out competency-based objectives that were clearly articulated to the students at each class session. Examples of such competencies include, "given a passage to read, the student will select a sentence that expresses the main ideas of the passage," and "the student will outline text from textbooks, worksheets, and training material, consistent with the instructor's model." The students reported that they had a clear idea of the expectations of the program, and that it provided them with valuable skills. **PIC 5, Annandale, Minnesota**

Individualizing Objectives and Curricula

Because of the wide diversity of SYETP participants' skills when they enter the program, the model of high-quality services calls for establishing learning objectives for each individual. Because individual students start at different points and progress at different rates, programs need to be able to accommodate individual students' needs and help all students grow. To do so, instructors need to understand what knowledge and skills students possess when they enter the program and how to adjust the program curriculum to accommodate each students' needs.

Because individual participants start at different points and progress at different rates, SYETP programs need to accommodate individuals' differences to help all participants grow.

To assess skills at enrollment, programs typically administer a diagnostic basic skills test at the beginning of the program. These test results can then be used to tailor instruction for individual students or to organize students into cooperative groups. The following two examples illustrate this approach.

Assessment results can be used to tailor instruction for individual participants or organize participants into cooperative groups.

Examples of Individualizing Objectives and Curricula

Example #1—Using Assessments to Tailor Computer-Aided Instruction. A program exclusively serving special education students relied primarily on computer-assisted learning software that began with an extensive assessment to diagnose skill deficiencies and then tailored the instruction to areas each participant needed to improve. This site found, however, that a single computer assisted package was not sufficient to address its students widely-varying needs. As a result, it acquired several types of software that could accommodate even very low reading levels. **PIC of Lehigh Valley, Allentown, Pennsylvania**

Example #2—Using Assessments to Tailor Workbook Instruction. Another program used the TABE to diagnose each students' learning needs and established an individual curriculum for each student, choosing from dozens of workbooks. **ADEC, Montgomery, Alabama**

One pitfall to this approach, however, is that instructors may simply "teach to the test," a practice that focuses on simply teaching students how to solve problems on the diagnostic test. For example, one case study SDA assessed students at the beginning of the program and identified areas in which students needed instruction. However, the instructor used the results to teach students how to answer the specific questions on the assessment test and then retested students until they answered the questions correctly. This practice subverts the intention of the SYETP program and merely teaches students to become test-takers rather than learners, problem-solvers, and thinkers.

One pitfall is that instructors may "teach to the test," which subverts the intention of the SYETP program and merely teaches participants to become test-takers.

Moreover, in assessing students' skills and knowledge, programs should also be aware of the difficulty some disadvantaged students may have with traditional paper and pencil assessments; limited English language proficiency, for example, or students' negative experiences with previous paper and pencil assessments may result in test scores that do not accurately reflect a students' knowledge. Thus, tailoring instruction based on this assessment

alone may result in objectives that are too high or low for individual students.

One alternative or supplement to paper-and-pencil tests is for the instructor to meet informally with each student at the beginning of the program. Students, better than anyone else, can provide guidance about how the instructor might engage them and what is of value to them. For example, instructors could ask students to reflect on their previous educational experiences and identify areas of interest, instructional approaches they enjoyed and felt were useful (as well as approaches that were less useful), and skills they believe they will need to be successful in the workplace. The instructor could then use this information to tailor the instructional content to respond to each participants' needs and interests. This verbal "assessment" would involve the students in the learning process, allowing each student to play a role in his or her education and to define what is meaningful.

Meeting informally with each participant is an alternative—students, better than anyone else, can provide guidance about what is of value to them.

An additional strategy for individualizing instruction is to alter instructional methods to accommodate different students' needs. This can be a very successful way to meet students' needs, as is discussed under instruction methods, below.

Altering instructional methods to accommodate different participants' needs is also an effective strategy.

Alternative strategies that are not recommended are to offer separate classes to those with varying needs or to group individuals with similar skills and assign different material to those groups. The disadvantage to these approaches is that students may perceive that expectations are lower for them because they are not exposed to the same interesting material as their peers; they may perceive themselves in the "dumb" group. As a result, they may live up to what they perceive to be expectations for them by not trying very hard with the material they are given.

A strategy that is not recommended is to group individuals based on their test scores.

Setting High Expectations for Students

Instructors should set goals for their students that are challenging, yet realistic given the limited time frame of SYETP. Extremely high goals can be discouraging for students, who may not feel confident that they can reach them. On the other hand, low goals may frustrate or bore students who know they can do better. Students generally respond positively to high expectations set for them. "It makes you want to learn," explained one participant in a

Setting goals for participants that are challenging yet realistic is important because, as one youth stated, "It makes you want to learn."

program offering basic skills remediation embedded in a business course to high school dropouts.

Examples of Setting High Expectations for Students

Example #1—Setting High Expectations in a Traditional Context. One instructor taught English to college-bound students during the normal school year. He decided that his summer youth participants should also be exposed to higher-order English skills and so organized his curriculum around helping students take the SAT test. Although all his summer participants were identified as "poor students," he treated them just like his other students. At the end of the summer, all students passed the state English competency test, which they had previously failed. Students told observers that they found the course a good use of their time and were confident and eager to take the real SAT test in the fall. In the following year, both the guardian and school counselor of one learning disabled student said that he took school more seriously and took more responsibility for his work. **Baltimore City SDA, Baltimore, Maryland**

Example #2—Setting High Expectations in a Life Skills Context. One program provided basic skills remediation and SCANS skills instruction in the context of employability and life skills. The instructor was experienced, having taught in public schools for 7 years and in the Title II-C program for several years as well. She was dedicated and strongly committed to helping her students in every way she could, but expected diligence and effort from them in return. As one student remarked, "She helps us at whatever level we're on, and we can work at our own pace. But we know with her you have to get in there and work or she isn't going to fool with you. She expects us to get to work and get things done. If it wasn't for her, I wouldn't be taking the GED next week. She is hard, but in a good way. She just wants you to do something with yourself." **Hoosier Falls PIC, Jefferson, Indiana**

Contextualizing the Instructional Content

The third aspect of program content is the context in which instruction is presented. As discussed in detail in Chapter I, when youth are taught skills in the abstract—for example, through drill-and-practice—they very often have a hard time seeing the connection between what they are being taught in school and their goals for life outside of school. Indeed, by the time students are enrolled in the Summer Youth program, they have experienced many years of education. Yet many of these students continue to do poorly in school, often because they fail to see the importance of education for their future.

When youth are taught in the abstract—for example through drill-and-practice—they often cannot see the connection between what they are learning in school and their goals for life outside of school.

By contrast, learning within a functional context, especially a workplace context, is a powerful motivator and ensures that the skills being taught are relevant to them. As one case study youth who participated in a program using a functional context stated, "When we did math, like on budgets and shopping, it made much more sense than just doing plain numbers. It was more interesting, and it was like life."

Learning within a functional context is more motivating and helps youth see the relevance of their new skills.

The challenge of providing educational instruction in a functional context is particularly great for those classroom programs teaching academics directly. But even in these traditional classrooms, SYETP programs can make the classroom content relevant to students' lives. Strategies include having students bring their life experiences and knowledge with them to the classroom or using real-world materials.

For example, in a class session intended to help students develop English skills, having students read segments from their local newspaper—which contains information pertinent to students—may be more engaging than having students read from a textbook. Similarly, instructors might ask students to bring mathematics problems from their jobs to discuss with the class. Moreover, having students write about personal experiences—for example at their job associated with the Summer Youth project—in a journal may encourage them to be more thoughtful about their work than they would if they were writing and answering questions about a work of literature. Below are examples of programs teaching educational skills directly that embedded the content is functional contexts.

In traditional classrooms, using real world materials instead of texts may be more engaging to youth.

Examples of Using Real-Life Experiences in Traditional Programs

Example #1—Teaching Writing Using Journals. Several programs had students maintain journals. One program had students write in their journals 3 to 4 times a week about their experiences at work. Another asked students to write reflectively about what they would do in real life circumstances, such as seeing someone cheating on a test.

Example #2—Teaching Writing Using Letters. In another program, each participant wrote a letter to a local business suggesting an area in which the business could improve. Students composed letters that complimented the business on its good qualities and made suggestions for improvement. Participants then mailed the letters. Many received replies. One student indicated that she tried much harder on this letter than in a regular school assignment because it was actually sent out with her signature. **Eastern Kentucky SDA, Hazard, Kentucky**

Example #3—Relating Math Instruction to Occupational Choices. One project had students identify a potential career goal at the beginning of the program. Although most of the math was presented in an academic context, the instructor individualized students' curricula to reflect the math skills needed in a student's chosen occupation. In his teaching, the instructor would also stress which concepts were most relevant; in the observed classroom, he told one student to "pay particular attention to doing this well; they do a lot of this in carpentry." Students also visited three vocational classrooms, where the vocational instructors pointed out the basic skills needed for that occupation. Students reported that they saw the linkages between academic skills and real life. One student reported, "The teachers told us what academic skills and training we needed to do the jobs in our career areas." **PIC 5, Annandale, Minnesota**

The challenge for programs using a real-life context is ensuring that the materials provide meaningful educational content.

For programs teaching educational skills using a pre-employment context or life skills context, the challenge is quite different. By definition, these programs provide a functional context; the challenge is ensuring that the program provides meaningful educational content. Programs, therefore, need to clearly define the educational objectives, as discussed previously, and help students understand the educational skills they are using and how to apply them in a wide variety of other contexts. Many case study programs did not help students see this link. For example, math workbooks often simply told students to multiply a sales price by a specific percentage to calculate a sale tax, but did not

help students understand why this was the correct procedure or how to calculate percentages in other contexts.

Examples of Using Real Life Experiences in a Life Skills Context

Example #1—Teaching Reading Using a Job Search Context. One program provided opportunities for youth to practice their reading skills by presenting them with materials designed to have them think about career goals and the process of searching for a job. Workbook materials encouraged students to reflect on their interests, values, and abilities and described typical work tasks and qualifications required for a variety of common entry-level jobs. Next, the workbook described the steps one might take to find a job, including reading and interpreting want ads, asking friends and acquaintances for job leads and contacting employers. Periodically throughout the workbook, youth were quizzed on their understanding of topics that had been presented, and crossword puzzles tested their understanding of new vocabulary. **San Bernardino Employment and Training Agency, San Bernardino, California**

Example #2—Teaching Math Using Shopping and Budgeting. One provider was following SDA guidelines in developing a curriculum that provided remediation using a functional context. It selected materials from a variety of sources, and these were supplemented by the instructors who brought in additional materials and thought up their own exercises.

The math instruction provided to participants consisted of a number of opportunities for youth to apply their math skills to address life-skills issues. In one exercise, students were given information about the average salaries of persons with different levels of education. They were then asked to calculate the cost of dropping out in terms of lost wages and buying power. Another exercise saw them calculate monthly budgets based on the money they were earning through their participation in the summer program. In another exercise, youth went on a simulated "shopping trip" and were to practice comparative shopping in making purchases with a hypothetical budget. Thus, students were given opportunities to practice their math skills in a variety of situations.

Participants were enthusiastic about the program and, during the focus groups conducted with them, several specifically mentioned how much they enjoyed the math exercises. One student asserted that "I understand fractions much better now," and others nodded in assent. **SDA-One, Lebanon, Virginia**

Example #3—Teaching Decision-Making Skills. One program targeted minority youth who were identified as at risk of dropping out of high school. During part of each day, participants would attend class providing basic skills remediation in a life-skills contexts; the objectives included not only providing skills training but encouraging young people to think seriously about their lives and their futures. During the remaining part, the participants worked in various jobs in a nearby hospital, in which they were encouraged to take responsibility. Teacher's aides were carefully chosen to serve as mentors and role models. Helping young people think about themselves in a new way was one of program's clear accomplishments.

During the focus group, one youth remarked, "I feel a lot better about myself now than I did at the start of the program. Another commented, "I now know that I have to stay in school to do well if I'm going to have a future." One of the aides provided a proper summation by remarking, "Kids who thought of themselves as losers now realize that they can achieve their goals."
Lubbock/Garza PIC, Lubbock, Texas

Improving the Student Assessment Process

Students must be able to see both the long-term and short-term objectives of the program.

It is important not only to make the content real for students, but to make the objectives of the lessons known to students. Students must be able to see both long-term and short-term (e.g., each classroom meeting) objectives for the program. Students cannot get motivated to do something if they do not understand why they are being asked to do it. Thus, it is vital to not only make objectives clear to students but work with students to understand if those objectives are being reached.

As programs broaden their focus to include more complex skills, they must also change their assessments to allow participants to demonstrate their skills in multiple areas in multiple ways.

Typically, SYETP classroom programs have students complete a pre-test, to determine their level of knowledge, and a post-test, to measure how much students have learned during the course of the summer youth program. This one-time assessment, however, is less useful for instructors than ongoing feedback about students' progress that they can use to organize their instruction during the course of the program. Moreover, if programs broaden their focus to include both

basic skills and SCANS skills, assessments must also broaden to provide information on the extent to which students are gaining skills that allow them to use knowledge in functional contexts. Thus, students should be assessed in such a manner that allows them to illustrate their skills in multiple areas in multiple ways.

Relating Assessment to Students' Goals

Holding regular meetings with participants is one assessment strategy.

One strategy for assessing students' progress over the course of the program is to have instructors hold regular meetings with each participant to discuss his or her progress toward meeting his or her goals, review what was learned, and make suggestions for improvement. Similarly, instructors might also present assessment results so that students can gauge their own progress. This is illustrated in the example below.

Example of Relating Assessment to Student's Objectives

Example #1—Using Traditional Assessments Related to Students' Goals. This program developed an individual curriculum for each participant that established specific achievement objectives. Daily drills and interim test scores were recorded on a bulletin board—not in a way that compared results among students but that showed each student's progress and achievement relative to his or her own objectives. Students were eager to point out how well they were doing relative to their goals. In a follow-up interview, one student reported with pride that her math scores had improved from 65 to 96 during the summer and that she had raised her math grades significantly in the next school year. **Baltimore City SDA, Baltimore, Maryland**

Having Participants Maintain Portfolios

Having participants maintain portfolios is another effective assessment strategy.

Another assessment strategy is to have participants maintain portfolios—a collection of the participants' work that illustrates what skills and knowledge the participant has gained over the course of the summer.

Although a portfolio should include a variety of illustrations of the student's work, the instructor should not simply place all of the student's work into a file and call it a portfolio. A portfolio is more than a simple collection of work, for two reasons.

First, students, who are most familiar with their work, should play an important role in developing their portfolios. Indeed, DOL states that "it is highly desirable for youth to actively participate in the documentation process—e.g., keeping journals which become part of the portfolios." Portfolio development can be an occasion for student/teacher interaction, so that teachers become familiar with students' work and students can discuss their work and knowledge with instructors and how a particular piece of work best provides evidence of learning.

Second, the content of portfolios is selective. Examples of the type of work that might be included are:

- Developmental work—early drafts and final products of written work, for example—so that students can see how they improved their work.
- "Best work" that exhibits students' mastery.
- Tangible products that document the processes (e.g., planning, decision making, or soliciting and using feedback) that a student engaged in. For example, this might include a description of the team work process that would illustrate the student's interaction skills.
- A narrative for each piece of "evidence" placed in the portfolio that describes what skill the evidence documents.

A similar assessment strategy is holding "demonstrations" of what participants have learned.

Another similar assessment approach is to hold "demonstrations" of what students have learned. These might consist of informal showcases for interested outsiders (e.g., neighbors, teachers, advisors, parents, or friends) in which the student points out the work they have done and explains how they did it. This requires them to give an authentic account of the work they have done and allows them to receive public credit for their accomplishments from other adults and peers.

Example of Having Students Maintain Portfolios

Example #1—Developing Portfolios that Provide Tangible Evidence of Progress. This program stated that the purpose of portfolios was as a "technique that showcases the efforts and accomplishments our youth have achieved... (T)he wide array of a students' experiences can be captured in a tangible way to give a more complete portrait of his/her capabilities and progress over time." The portfolios include students' products, writing samples from drafts to finished products, written reflections by the student about what he or she has learned, and a resume. **New Directions, New Bedford, Massachusetts**

Encouraging Participants to Reflect on Their Own Progress

High-quality instruction should actively involve participants in reflecting about what they have learned.

High-quality instructors should not only actively involve students in learning, but should continually encourage students to reflect on what they have gained from the activities. This reflection might be done as a group discussion, or might take the form of students writing down their positive and negative feelings about the activities. Such reflection can assist the teacher to understand how what he or she is doing engages students and helps them to learn; in other words it can be a form of ongoing program evaluation.

Reflection can encourage participants to make the connection between what they have learned and their own lives.

Reflection can also benefit students because the reflection can encourage students to make connections between what they have learned and their own lives. For example, a teacher might ask students to spend some time writing about a lesson and how they might use it or what else might have been beneficial to learn given their individual goals. Instructors can then use this information to guide instruction in a direction that is beneficial to all students.

Promoting High-Quality Instructional Methods

High-quality instructional methods can also help students gain greater educational value from the summer youth program. Several strategies to improve instructional methods can be particularly valuable in facilitating student learning, including: (a) redefining student and teacher classroom roles, (b) actively involving students using a variety of instructional methods, (c) maximizing students' learning opportunity, and (d) encouraging student reflection.

Redefining Student and Teacher Classroom Roles

Simply because many SYETP educational programs occur in a classroom environment does not mean that the instruction must be limited to teachers "transmitting" information to students sitting passively in their seats. Instead, teachers can act as "coaches" or "facilitators" of participants' learning.

Even in traditional classrooms, teachers can act as "coaches" or "facilitators" of participants' learning.

As coaches, instructors relinquish some control and allow participants to take some responsibility for their own learning and for introducing new ideas or theories into the instructional process. Rather than telling students how to do something, coaches enable students to become more active, self-guided learners who follow their curiosity, think critically, and try to make complex connections between what they are learning in the classroom and their future. Effective instruction thus actively involves participants in defining the educational issues and problems, devising potential strategies to solve problems, applying skills in carrying out those strategies, and evaluating the effectiveness of those chosen strategies.

This approach also demonstrates respect for students as responsible individuals. As one case study student reported: "This program is a lot better than regular school. We got to think, and the teachers did not treat us like idiots."

"This program is a lot better than regular school. We got to think."

Coaching strategies include the following:

- *Use effective questioning techniques.* Good questions call for student analysis, synthesis, and evaluative judgment. Ask probing questions that help students become good questioners themselves. "What do you think happens if...?" "Can you find another way? How might we find out?" "Can you show me where the text supports you? Can you give me an example?" Minimize the use of questions for which a single answer can be provided.
- *Provide hints, not answers.* Students should be encouraged to find solutions for themselves, and can often be put back on the right track to finding a solution with a simple hint. Providing the answer robs students of the opportunity to think for themselves and learn.
- *Encourage discourse.* Discourse—ways of representing, thinking, talking, agreeing, and disagreeing—can help students' understand differing perspectives, modify their own perspective, and learn from others.

- *Value mistakes.* Mistakes can reveal information about students' thinking processes for teachers to use in their instruction. Mistakes can also provide important opportunities for students to rethink their ideas. As a result, students become less afraid of making errors and more inclined to take risks that lead to new discoveries and understandings.
- *Observe students.* Students' reactions provide a measure of the degree to which they are understanding the concepts being studied. Instructors should adjust their instruction on the basis of students' reactions.

Examples of Redefining Student and Teach Roles

Example #1—Acting as a Coach to Special Education Students. This instructor of special education students put much of the responsibility for making decisions and solving problems on the participants, stating that they "are often more capable than anyone gives them credit for." While supervising students who were putting out a newsletter, the instructor deliberately kept himself in the background, acting as a resource and leaving it to the participants to carry out their own work. **PIC of Lehigh Valley, Allentown, Pennsylvania**

Example #2—Helping Students Apply What They Know. During the teaching of an aviation lesson, the instructor put a formula on the board and discussed how to solve it using algebra. When some students did not grasp the concept, she did not tell them the correct answer. Instead, she helped them break the problem into smaller pieces until all the students could solve it. This instructor would not let students settle for a rudimentary grasp of the problem, but pushed them to thoroughly understand and apply what they learned. She said that some participants needed a lot of tailored instruction to master the lessons, which she provided because "it is important for them to learn and not just memorize." **Central SDA, Oklahoma City, Oklahoma**

Example #3—Encouraging Students to Collaborate to Solve Problems. Participants in one program received instruction in basic skills embedded in a work-skills context. The staff promoted the idea of the classroom as a place of business, where the focus was on team effort to get the assignment done, with minimal "interference" from the instructor, or "supervisor." For example, the math instructor encouraged students to collaborate with their classmates if that would help them get the work done. Similarly, the language arts instructor coached participants on an as-needed basis as they worked through their assignments. Students typically

made simple requests for instruction (e.g., "is this the correct next step?") or they wanted to talk over their own ideas with her. In either case, her responses often took the form of probing questions, which helped clarify their thinking without giving the an the answer away. **Manasota PIC, Sarasota, Florida**

Encouraging Active Learning through Different Instructional Methods

Different instructional methods provide different opportunities for active learning.

Traditional instructional methods—such as lectures or having students work alone on problems—often result in rote, drill-and-practice learning opportunities that students find neither stimulating nor useful for their lives. However, when instructional methods actively involve students in learning, classroom instruction can provide beneficial learning opportunities for students. Different instructional methods provide different opportunities for active learning; varying instructional methods can build on the strengths and minimize the weaknesses of each method.

Using Lectures that Encourage Active Learning

Even in a lecture, a skillful teacher can stimulate participants to actively think about the material and ask questions.

Lectures are a very efficient way to impart knowledge to students, but often this instructional method does not require students to act upon that knowledge. A skillful teacher, however, can use lectures to stimulate students to think about the material being presented and encourage questions so that students interact with the teacher.

Example of Using Lectures that Encourage Active Learning

Example #1—Interacting with Students during Lectures. One teacher spent a substantial amount of time lecturing to students, but she motivated them about why the topics were important. She also interacted with the students during the lecture to make sure they understood. She took time with them and repeated the material until everyone understood. During the observed lecture, the students were clearly interested in learning how to compute the area of a rectangle, frequently asking questions about the material. During our focus group discussion, students talked with great animation about how much they liked the teacher because she made sure everyone "got it." **Office of Employment and Training, Jersey City, New Jersey**

Conducting Group Discussions

In group discussions, participants actively engage in discussions not only with the instructor but also with other participants.

Group discussions can also be either used alone or in combination with lectures to promote active learning. In group discussions, students actively engage in discussion not only with the teacher but with other students in the class. During high-quality group discussions, students should be asked to think about the material presented and draw conclusions on it. Such discussions can help students understand other students' perspectives on both academic and social issues, and may help students relate the material to their own life experiences.

Group discussions should not happen only among students, however. It is important for instructors to use coaching techniques in the context of the group discussions so that students extend, rather than simply reiterate, what they have learned when they are discussing an issue.

Examples of Conducting Group Discussions

Example #1—Conducting Student-Directed Group Discussions. The teacher in one program tried to make his traditional classroom "real" through group discussions. The group discussions were student directed, and students were encouraged to express their opinions. For example, after watching a video about the Ku Klux Klan, the class held a lively discussion about racism in the country today. **Central Area Partnership Consortium, Greenville, Michigan**

Example #2—Providing Rewards for Group Participation. Another program encouraged students to actively participate in group discussion by giving small rewards (e.g., a candy bar, a small gift certificate) for participation. When one student received an award for asking a good question of the group, the others were suddenly more eager to participate. **Central Area Partnership Consortium, Greenville, Michigan**

Encouraging Peer Teaching and Cooperative Groupings

Participants may learn more by discussing concepts with a partner or small group.

Group discussions need not include the entire class simultaneously. Indeed, students may learn more by discussing concepts with just one other partner or with a small group of three or four other students. This "cooperative grouping" both involves students actively and lets them take responsibility for teaching others in their group. Research suggests that when students take on the role

of the teacher, and are responsible for passing on information to their peers, they learn the material better than they would have by working on it alone.

Cooperative groups are effective because the group can also work together to decide how to approach a problem and devise solutions. Students in a group should be encouraged to provide a rationale for their solutions and to jointly discuss reasons why they may have arrived at different solutions. This discourse may help students gain a better understanding of both basic academic skills and higher-order skills such as negotiation and interpersonal relations. Programs that serve a heterogeneous target group may particularly benefit from using cooperative learning activities because students at different skill levels in different age or developmental groups can assist each other to learn.

Again, however, peer teaching groups should not supplant instruction from a trained professional. Teacher supervision and coaching will still be necessary to ensure that students are learning and on-task. When cooperative groups are working together, instructors should circle the room to monitor students' understanding and attention or provide coaching when students have difficulty with a particular problem. Interjecting questions to groups can push students to hone in on the intended concept.

However, peer teaching should not supplant instruction from a trained professional.

Examples of Encouraging Peer Teaching and Cooperative Grouping

Example #1—Using Cooperative Groupings. In one English class, students worked on assignments in groups of two to three people. They helped each other look up vocabulary words, decided together how to approach assignments, and supported each other in completing the work. **Baltimore City SDA, Baltimore, Maryland**

Example #2—Pairing Students to Act as Teachers. The instructors manual in another program called on teachers to "get students involved...ask a lot of questions...use every opportunity to have [students] stand up and explain things." One way this program tried to encourage active learning was through peer teaching. Students who were performing well were paired with others who needed more help to work on assignments. Students were encouraged to help each other by comparing notes, working

on assignments together, and coming up with solutions jointly. One instructor noted that the students sometimes explained things to each other in new or unique ways he never would have thought of. **Mayor's Office of Chicago, Chicago, Illinois**

Using Computer-Based Instruction and Workbooks

Many SYETP programs use computer-based or workbook-based instruction to assist student learning. The advantage of these instructional methods is that they allow students to move at their own pace rather than at the pace of the instructor or other students.

Although computer-based instruction allows participants to move at their own pace, these programs often require only rote responses through drill and practices.

However, one of the weaknesses of these methods is that they often require students to do drill and practice exercises or respond rotely. Often, computer-based instruction asks students to practice basic mathematics computational skills rather than help students learn how to solve problems or apply knowledge in real situations. Many students view this work as boring. For example, one student commented, "It's boring. We can't talk. It would be good to have some group stuff."

Better programs encourage participants to think about the material and apply it in different contexts.

SYETP programs, therefore, need to select instructional software and workbooks with care. Better materials encourage students to think about the material and apply it in different contexts. One student reacted to such a software package by stating, "This type of learning helps you to understand some things that teachers can't explain."

Another strategy for overcoming weaknesses of drill and practice or computer-based instruction and capitalizing on strengths of these approaches is to combine these methods with other classroom methods that require more active student participation. For example, using cooperative learning or group discussions might give students the opportunity to discuss and reflect on what they are learning in their workbooks.

Example of Using Computer-Based Instruction to Encourage Active Learning

Example #1—Using Computer-Based Instruction that Promotes Thinking Skills. This program provided computer-based instruction using a variety of software packages. One of the most popular included modules with themes relating to issues of important to the students' lives, such as the "alcohol dilemma" and "sports tampering." This software asked students to think about these topics as well as answer questions about the main idea of specific passages. **Lake County SDA, Gary, Indiana**

Designing Group Projects

Even within classrooms, participants can learn by working on small-group projects.

Even within classroom programs, students can learn by working on small-group projects. These projects may help students gain knowledge of both academic and SCANS skills and enable students to learn from each other through the process of working together to solve a problem. Projects need not be extensive—indeed, they cannot be, given the time constraints of the summer youth program—but they should encourage students to think about and apply knowledge. Moreover, instructors should encourage students to see the project through from start to finish so that they can recognize the hard work they have done and be proud of their accomplishment.

Examples of Designing Group Projects

Example #1—Designing a Group Project to Benefit the Community. One program had students plan a group project "to give something back to the city;" they decided on a fundraising activity, with the proceeds to be donated to a soup kitchen for the homeless. Students were responsible for deciding on the activity and carrying it out. **City of Los Angeles SDA, Los Angeles, California**

Example #2—Designing a Group Project that Applies New Skills. As a reward for completing a traditional academic program, the instructor in one program had students landscape a small plot in front of the school. Students reported in the focus group that they measured the land, calculated the square footage, planned how far apart the plants should be, and then actually planted the foliage. Students reported that they saw the connection between work and learning. One student stated, "we will have to use math on the job, so we need to learn it." **Eastern Kentucky SDA, Hazard, Kentucky**

Maximizing Students' Learning Opportunity

Encouraging Students to Stay "on Task"

Participants need to stay on task—they cannot learn when they are engaged in irrelevant activities.

Participants can not learn if they are engaging in irrelevant activities or waiting to have their work checked. Strategies for helping students get the most out of the Summer Youth program by keeping students on task and learning include:

- *Setting high expectations for student behavior* so that they know that "goofing off" will not be allowed. For example, one case study provider believed it was important to compensate for the disorganization in its students' lives by setting high expectations for discipline and order, which were consistently enforced. When observed, students were working diligently on their assignments.
- *Using a variety of teaching strategies*, particularly methods that promote active learning. For example, a student in a program that frequently used class discussions and team projects, as well as computer-assisted instruction, reported, "Sometimes time flew by—you know, you weren't sitting there staring out the window waiting for classes to end."
- *Setting clear schedules* to which students are expected to adhere so that they understand the time frame they have to complete their assignments. Two case study programs using the same curriculum provided contrasting approaches. In one, the schedule was clear and students worked hard to complete their assignments to keep to it. In the other, many students were not completing modules but were nonetheless allowed to move on to the next one.
- *Creating incentives for time spent on task.* For example, one case study program simulated a business environment and docked students' pay for being late or goofing off.
- *Observing students'* behavior so that instructors can gauge whether students are engaged and learning. One case study teacher, for example, indicated that he watched facial expressions and asked questions frequently to see whether his students were grasping the concepts he was presenting. In contrast, another teacher was so involved in her material that she was unaware she was performing before a bored audience.

Providing Individualized Attention

Providing individualized attention is another important way to enhance participants' opportunities to learn.

Providing individualized attention is another important way to enhance students' opportunities to learn. Small class sizes and low student-instructor ratios—hallmarks of many SYETP programs—are keys to being able to spend adequate time with each student.

Reducing reliance on lectures also facilitates individualized instruction by freeing instructors to work separately with individuals or groups that need more assistance. For example, in one observed class, the instructor circulated among the students while they were working on their assignments to "troubleshoot." When he noticed that a young woman was attacking word problems incorrectly, he sat down and helped redirect her efforts.

Many case study participants expressed appreciation for the extra attention they received in SYETP relative to their regular school classes. Examples of their responses include:

> "He talked to us and pays attention to us. Our teachers at school don't talk to us or pay attention the way he does. Teachers in regular school don't have time for us."
>
> "I really liked the teachers. They spend more time, help us more, and explain things better than regular teachers."
>
> "I'm really impressed that the teachers care that we get work done. They are willing to help us with our assignments."
>
> "She really cares—it's not like school at all."

Individualized attention is particularly beneficial when instructors can fine-tune their teaching methods to match the learning styles of individual students. Such "adaptive instruction" is especially important for students who have not succeeded in traditional school environments. In one case study class, for example, the teacher and aide circulated among small groups to answer students' questions. The teacher stated, "There are numerous ways to present the same thing. If a student does not understand it the first time, I change how I present it."

THUMBNAIL SKETCHES OF HIGH-QUALITY CLASSROOM TRAINING PROGRAMS

Sketch of Traditional Classroom Program

Background

The program was funded by the SDA in Baltimore, Maryland. The provider was a local school district that adopted a traditional remediation strategy. Although the SDA had included language in its RFP about teaching the SCANS skills, the provider did not have a clear idea about what these skills entailed. However, the instructor, who was responsible for developing her own curriculum, wanted to make the program more engaging than those of past years.

The instructor developed this program to make it more engaging than typical remediation programs.

This classroom program—which met for 8 weeks, 24 hours each week—targeted 10 youth who performed below the 9th grade level in reading or math; the instructor estimated that the grade levels of enrolled youth ranged between the 2nd and 7th grade.

Content

Although the instructor was not familiar with the SCANS framework, she nonetheless included a wide array of SCANS-related skills in her program, including:

The content included instruction in a wide array of SCANS-related skills.

- Basic academic skills or reading, writing, and mathematics.
- Skills to find and use information.
- Communication skills.
- Teamwork and interpersonal skills.
- Creative thinking and problem-solving skills.
- Computer literacy skills.

Students learned these skills in a very functional context. Newspapers, magazines, correspondence, and computers, as well as some traditional texts, served as learning materials. Basic skills instruction was presented through the context of meaningful activities. Two examples of contextual learning were observed.

Newspapers, correspondence, and computers served as learning materials.

First, each day, as part of the reading/communications curriculum, the students had to select an article from the daily newspaper, read it, write a summary, present the summary orally, and lead a discussion session about the information gathered. Skills gained through this activity included extracting meaning from written sources,

interpreting and communicating information, writing to communicate ideas, using the computer to accomplish a task, speaking before a group, providing information to support one's ideas, as well as the academic skills of reading, grammar, sentence structure, and vocabulary. Youth were very enthusiastic about this activity. Because the youth selected the article, they were motivated by the content. In the observed classroom, they were printing their summaries and proofreading each others' work. In the observed group discussion, youth gave their opinions and supported them with specific ideas.

Each day students selected a newspaper article, wrote a summary, presented the summary to the class, and led a group discussion about the information and ideas presented.

Second, students were asked to write a letter to a local establishment suggesting an area that the business could improve. This entailed the students applying numerous SCANS skills. Each youth had to: (a) select a business (decision making); (b) identify to whom the letter should be addressed (acquire information); (c) determine where to mail the letter (utilize available resources); (d) compliment the business on its good qualities (communicate ideas); (e) suggest an area for improvement (exercise leadership and evaluate performance); (f) compose a business letter in the correct format, including correcting a draft (English skills and monitoring and correcting performance); and (g) use the computer to produce the letter (use technology to accomplish a tasks). The youth then mailed the letters to the business, which added to making the activity real; some students even got a response.

Participants used many SCANS skills to write and send letters to local businesses and organizations.

As illustrated by these examples, the youth were involved with the planning and implementing activities within the parameters of the assigned lesson. They were also involved in assessing their progress. Youth collected their work in a portfolio and evaluated their work on an on-going basis. Youth shared what they worked on with each other to correct their work. The instructor also provided on-going feedback to the students about their progress.

Youth were involved in assessing their own progress.

Instructional Methods

Rather than listening to lectures or completing workbook exercises, the students learned by doing. They sought out knowledge and actively used skills that applied that knowledge. They worked in teams, engaged in peer-to-peer teaching, engaged in group discussions, or worked individually.

Participants learned by doing; they worked in teams, participated in group discussions, and taught each other.

The basic skills were taught in multiple contexts so the students could see how to apply them correctly. For example, students

practiced writing skills daily by writing news article summaries, business letters, or reports on books they read. As another example, the students learned interpersonal skills in a variety of ways. They were encouraged to work together and solicit feedback from each other. During group discussion, group projects, and daily interactions, the instructor often interjected lessons on how to interact with others in group and on the job. Students also discussed situations that happened outside the classroom as "case studies" on how to appropriately interact with others.

Skills were taught in multiple contexts so participants could see how to apply them correctly.

The instructor acted as a coach or mentor, rather than the authority with all the answers. For example, when reviewing their writing, she did not correct their assignments. Rather, she would talk them through the corrections by prompting them with comments such as "What do you think you are missing here?" and "There are some misspelled words; why don't you see if you can find them."

The instructor acted as a coach rather than the authority with all the answers.

As a result, thinking and problem solving skills were developed when students reasoned through their own questions rather than the instructor giving them the answers. The instructor would give students some points to think about then leave it up to them to figure out the next steps, where they went wrong, or how to get the needed information. Two hand-written posters were posted on the walls: "Your opinion is always right as long as you support your stance," and "Think before you speak." Both of these principles were the foundations for the summer learning experiences.

Youth Response to the Program

The youth were excited about the program. They reported that they felt involved and that it "wasn't like school." They particularly liked the teacher, stating, "She talks straight with us," and "She gives us more attention than in regular school." They pointed with pride to the activities they had accomplished. One student reported that she tried harder because what they were doing was real.

Participants were excited about the program because they felt involved.

Sketch of Classroom Program Using Real-World Context

Background

This program was funded by Lake County SDA, Gary, Indiana. The provider was a local school district that had been a provider of summer youth services for the previous four years. It consistently modified its programs in response to participant feedback. The SDA

took responsibility for recruiting, conducting initial intake, assessing skill level and interests, and assigning participants to various summer programs. The provider was responsible for conducting further assessment, including the TABE and an interest inventory, planning the program curriculum, instruction, post-testing and documentation of progress. All instructors were certified secondary school teachers, and the vocational instructors conducted classes throughout the regular school year. Youth were compensated $4.25 per hour for their participation. Participants could also earn one high school credit in math or English.

This provider consistently modified its program in response to participant feedback.

This program taught academic and SCANS skills in a pre-employment/work maturity and vocational context. It served 80 participants, rotating them through 7 vocational courses, 2 academic courses, and an employment skills class. The program was 8 weeks long, operating 4 hours a day, 5 days per week. It targeted in-school youth ages 14-19 who were at risk of dropping out of school.

Content

The program curriculum was tailored to help participants see the link between educational skills and the skills needed to succeed in the workplace. The primary objectives were to motivate youth to stay in school by introducing them to various occupational areas, improve basic math and reading skills, and cultivate a sense of responsibility among participants. More specifically, the program was designed to meet the following objectives:

The curriculum was designed to help participants see the link between educational skills and the skills needed in the workplace.

- Improve basic reading and math skills that are essential to function in a vocational training program or job setting.
- Develop positive work habits, attitudes, and employability skills.
- Expand the career awareness of participants by exposing them to various occupations and vocational training opportunities.
- Encourage youth to remain in school by providing support services aimed at improving motivation, self-concept, and confidence.

Academic enrichment was integrated with occupational exploration.

The program integrated academic enrichment with occupational exploration in (1) auto mechanics, (2) auto body, (3) technical drafting/computer graphics, (4) computer applications, (5) word processing, (6) food production and management, and (7) health occupations. In addition, those participants who were assessed as needing remediation (almost all participants) attended basic skills classes that provided intensive, individualized work in reading and math. In the math class, plans of study were based on areas where students needed credit. The reading course included sections on vocabulary, comprehension skills, critical thinking and inferential skills.

SCANS skills, such as critical thinking and interpersonal skills, were part of both the occupational and basic skills classes.

Several SCANS skills, such as critical thinking, acquiring and evaluating information, and developing strong interpersonal skills were incorporated into the occupational instruction and basic skills classes. For example, through the computer applications course participants learned about computer hardware, operating systems and software (acquiring information), and how to design and create a database (organizing and evaluating information). Other critical components of the program included an emphasis on teamwork, having respect for others, and the importance of punctuality.

Instructional Methods

Academic instruction in basic math and reading was integrated with occupational instruction. Vocational instructors explicitly incorporated math and language skills in their occupational courses. For example, the health occupations course included practice in reading and calculating height and weight measurements, and practice in writing and presenting participants' likes and dislikes. In addition, the instructors of the basic math and reading skills courses initially met with occupational instructors to identify ways to apply the basic skills to these occupational areas. In the math class for example, the instructor included lessons on metric units and conversion related to health occupations.

Instruction in the occupational courses was geared toward teaching a limited number of academic and occupational skills, and also to encourage the participants to develop a broad perspective about the range of related occupations and the types of educational skills required for different occupations. For example, the computer graphics instructor emphasized that it was more important for youth to develop

an attitude and ability to use computers and software effectively than it was for them to develop several specific and complex computer drafting skills. This instructor encouraged participants to view the computer software as a tool, and emphasized that their skills and effectiveness would increase as they became more familiar with the software.

Progress was documented during the summer and in the following school year.

Student progress was documented during the summer and in the school year following program participation. Participants' accomplishments during the program were measured by their pre- and post-test scores of academic skills. Personal notebooks were also kept by participants or their teachers for each class. In the auto body class for example, participants accumulated their handouts, their work such as estimates of labor and costs, and newspaper ads for appropriate employment opportunities for mechanics. Finally, the post-program outcome was measured by whether participants remained in school, which was documented by the school at the second semester of the following school year.

Youth Response to the Program

Participants were confident that they were developing skills necessary to get a job.

Participants were very pleased with their experiences in this program. Several youth expressed a desire to have a longer program so that they would have an opportunity to attend more vocational classes. They felt that the instructors cared about them and wanted them to learn and stay in school. They were also confident and satisfied that they were developing skills necessary to get a job. The youth also indicated that they were happy that participants were well behaved during the program, noting that they were "more civilized because they don't want to get fired," and that that behavior might carry over into the school year. Finally, youth thought that the most important things they were learning during the summer program were communication skills and gaining respect for others, both students and teachers.